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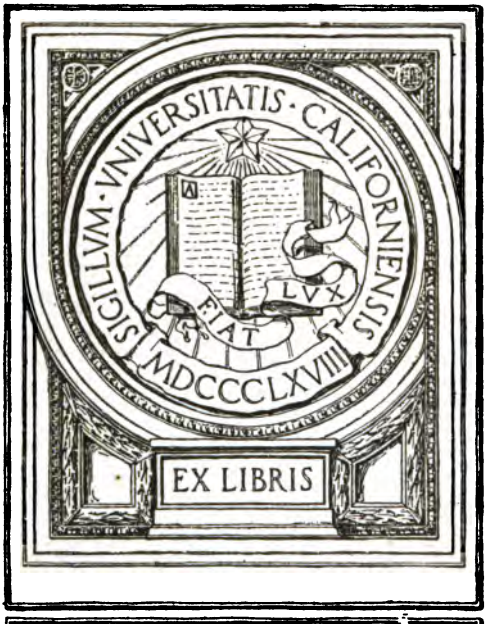

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JOFFRE CHAPS

FRENCH SOLDIER STORIES

BY PIERRE MILLE

TRANSLATED BY B. DRILLIEN

ILLUSTRATED BY HELEN MCKIE

UNDER THE TRICOLOUR

BARNAVAUX

LOUISE & BARNAVAUX

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

BY A. NEIL LYONS

KITCHENER CHAPS

ARTHUR'S

THE BODLEY HEAD

JOFFRE CHAPS

AND SOME OTHERS

BY PIERRE MILLE

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

BÉRENGÈRE DRILLIEN

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BOUDRU THE QUARRYMAN

BOUDRU THE QUARRYMAN

BEYOND all question this particular Terrible-Torial was older by five or six levies than the other Terrible-Torials in the trench. His beard, which since time immemorial he had not shaven, had a good deal more salt than pepper about it, and had anyone taken the trouble to look more closely at his face beneath the mud and dirt that coated it, they would have noticed other signs of approaching old age, deep lines, for instance, and gaps among the teeth. Still his age did not prevent him from holding his own, and he had even found a way of making himself particularly useful.

He did not discover the layer of limestone that formed the suessonian stratum, nor reflect upon the importance of its existence

in the rock formation of l'Ile de France. The name of Elie de Beaumont, its principal discoverer, was totally unknown to him. In fact his first feeling had been one of supreme contempt for the soft whitish rock, parts of which fell away in lumps that the rain beat into a creamy slush.

"Sandstone's the stuff for me," he would say. "If only this was sandstone. It goes in straight layers that you can cut through and find the sand beneath. Then the rain makes itself scarce, I can tell you."

He quickly regained his sangfroid, however, when confronted by this new material that to all appearances filled him with disgust, and succeeded in procuring some tools from somewhere, I don't know how. Then, having successfully unearthed a layer of hardish limestone, he cut from it large rectangular slabs, the very sight of which gratified the eye, so beautifully even were they, and with these slabs he paved the floor of the trench. There was never any

mud to be seen there after, never; it was as clean as the pavement of the Boulevard des Italiens, because the men also swept it out twice a day, being as proud as possible of their trench. One day some officers of the great Q. G. (Quartier Général), big-wigs on the Staff, took some reporters there to let them see how comfortable the men were. That was praise indeed!

This carver of rocks was called Boudru. His achievement did not stop at the paving of the trench, for he was never really happy except when handling his hammer and chisel. His comrades who slept in the little cemetery of the battalion had other things than the customary flowers and little green trees upon their graves. Thanks to Boudru, their last and glorious resting-places looked like real graves, with the crosses and tombstones surmounting them, all cut from the limestone. Finally, to pass away the time, this tireless worker bestowed an enormous portico upon the

trench, a veritable propylæum formed of two pillars of stone upon which strange crude designs appeared with the clean cut incisions of a Greek and the character of a Phrygian capital.

Partly out of curiosity and partly because he had nothing else to do, Private Bidau watched him at his labours. At intervals the enemy's sharpshooters sent a bullet whistling by, aimed at some unwary blue képi that had shown itself for a moment. Except for that there was nothing doing, the artillery on both sides was silent.

"You work jolly well," said Bidau. "I don't want to flatter you, but I must say you do work well. Anyone can see you're an old hand."

"I know all there is to know about stone," replied Boudru sententiously. "I've always been brought up on it, so to speak. As far as sculpture goes, well, that's another matter. I've never done any before, it amuses me and makes a bit of a change,

but it's not in my line. I wasn't a marble-cutter."

"Well, what were you then?" inquired Bidau.

"I used to make paving-stones at Ballainvilliers, near Longjumeau," explained Boudru complacently. "Don't you know Ballainvilliers? They've got the finest sandstone quarries and the best paving-stones in the world there. Yes, the English even came over there once to take a gang of workmen out to Malta. My father and my grandfather and great-grandfather, too, were all quarrymen, and long before that —I can't tell how long—there'd always been sandstone cutters in my family. I was put to work at thirteen making paving-stones. I'm forty-nine now."

"Forty-nine!" ejaculated Bidau in surprise, "I *thought*—I don't want to hurt your feelings, old man, but you do look seven or eight years older than the other old ones. Why did they send you to the

trenches and firing line? You were old enough to have stayed at home. In any case they should have taken you for the military workshops, and then only if they needed men for your particular line of work."

"But they did need my particular line, that's just it," cried Boudru with a chuckle.

He interrupted himself to exclaim:

"Get away from the periscope, you're always leaning up against it and they're always firing at it. Come nearer my way.

"Yes, as I was saying, the mayor, the police, and all the authorities at Ballainvilliers always said to me, 'Boudru, you won't be called up. The only men of your year that will be required are the skilled workmen who can be used in the service workshops. And you are a quarryman; what do they want with a quarryman? They aren't going to pave the road to Berlin!'

"Now I'll tell you something, and you can believe it or not, as you like. I wasn't overjoyed at sitting at home twiddling my thumbs, so to speak. I'm forty-nine, but as good as any other man. It's the dust in the quarries that has powdered my hair, I should say, for I'm perfectly strong. The quarry had stopped work, but so many of the men had gone to the war that I got work at three francs a day easy enough, so I had quite sufficient, it was nothing to do with being hungry. But I rather wanted to have a go at the Boches. Don't go so near the periscope, I tell you.

"I didn't intend to volunteer though, I'm one of those fellows that takes things as they come. If I'm wanted, well and good, if I'm not, I don't make a fuss. However, one fine day the *Brigadier de Gendarmerie* turned up with my marching orders.

"'You're going after all, then, père Boudru,' said he.

"'My word,' said I, 'that's all right. What for?'

"'I couldn't tell you even if I knew. You are called up on account of your trade, that's certain.'

"As this was the case I took my hammer, my pick and my saw, I believe I'd have put dynamite in too if I'd had any. I kissed the missis good-bye, after impressing upon her that she'd get twenty-five sous a day for herself and fifteen sous for the three kids, and off I went to the place where I'd been told to go, and where I put on the clothes I'm now standing in—a Territorial. Then I waited orders.

"I waited a week, two weeks, contented enough, but rather sick of having nothing to do, not a single damned thing to keep my pecker up. I kept on thinking, 'They want me because I cut stones. Where the deuce are their quarries?'

"At last, however, the colonel made his tour of inspection, a fine-looking man he

was too. He asked the captains and sergeant-majors about the skilled workmen, then said :

" ' Oh, they've sent them at last, have they ? It wasn't too soon either. That man (pointing to me) is to be placed as I directed. He is needed at once.'

" At last ! I picked up my bag of tools and followed the sergeant-major through the yard. Still no sign of a quarry. But, I reflected, ' They may be building defences.'

" Instead of that the sergeant-major took me into a workroom, where a man appeared to be suffocating amid about 15,000 tunics, coats, and trousers.

" ' Here's your man,' said the sergeant-major.

" ' And a good thing too,' remarked the man.

" I still held my bag of tools in my hand.

" ' What have you got in that bag ? ' asked the man, who, I noticed, wore a sergeant's stripes.

"'My tools, sergeant.'

"'You've brought them with you? You are a thoughtful sort of fellow; I must say it's most unusual.'

"I thereupon drew out the hammer, the chisel, and all the rest of it, and he stared until his eyes looked as though they would jump out of his head.

"'What's all this, *nom de Dieu!* what's it mean? Are you trying to pull my leg?'

"'No, sergeant, but as I told you, I brought my tools with me.'

"'Well, do you shrink a pair of trousers with a saw? We asked for cutters—aren't you a cutter?'

"'I'm a stone-cutter,' I answered stolidly.

"Do you see? They'd asked for cutters, and seeing *tailleur* (tailor, cutter) on my papers had not troubled to look any further. The tailor chap was furious, and said he'd have nothing to do with me, so I was thrown in with the others, and from one thing to

another I came out here. There! I told you so, they're firing at the periscope again. If you'd been an inch nearer you'd have got it beautifully. Look out what you're doing, fat-head!"

ADOLFUS MERL'S CHRISTMAS NIGHT

ADOLFUS MERL'S CHRISTMAS NIGHT

He was philosophical in his own way. He had endured so much misery since the battle of the Marne: the anguish of waiting at night for the attack, preferring that even once and for all to the unbearable anxiety of waiting amid the glare of the search-lights; the piercing cold that froze the feet; the mud of the trenches after the heavy winter rains and thaws, mud that rotted the soles and stitching of the boots so that they gaped open; the memory of forced marches without sleep, from twilight to dawn and from dawn to close of day, when instead of reaching Paris, amid the glorious rattle of drums and blare of trumpets and the songs of victory learned from earliest school-days, they had been forced to retreat

and retreat until they reached the holes from which they could no longer emerge, thankful at that to be still alive; the hunger that gnawed their vitals, forcing them to dig up roots in the fields and devour them; the insolence of the officers, who as the situation became worse made themselves harsher and more brutal in order to enforce a more rigorous discipline—all these conditions, cruel as they were, he yet forced his will to accept with resignation mingled even with gratitude. "When the material conditions of life become too hard," he reflected, "they at least prevent you from thinking and remembering, and that is exceedingly desirable."

For Adolfus Merl, of Rastadt, did not love war. He would not confess as much, because it seemed a sin against his Emperor and his country. He did all he could to stifle the voice of his instincts and his real nature. Like many Germans, the education which had aroused in him feelings of martial

pride was entirely at variance with his nature, which was indolent and peaceful. A Frenchman would have settled matters by revolting against the teachings of his childhood, but, being a German, Adolfus Merl worshipped and felt the need of obedience. He reproached himself for his lack of enthusiasm as for a serious sin in much the same way as a Christian attributes his lack of grace to his own religious doubts. But he could not help dreaming of the days to come, days of wealth and abundance, when Germany would rejoice in a fruitful peace.

And yet he was not one of the fortunate ones of the earth. He had lived but poorly for thirty years in his little house outside Rastadt, a little house built exactly like two hundred others put up by the owner of the india-rubber factory in which he was employed. It contained four rooms, including the kitchen, and a little garden separated from the road by a gate. On

the left was a lean-to, where his wife fattened a pig, and year in, year out, the garden yielded enough vegetables for the family's consumption.

They had their meals in the kitchen, and his grandfather, an old non-commissioned officer with a pension and the iron cross, who had fought in 1870, occupied the best room on the ground floor. Adolfus and his wife, Luisa, slept on the next floor, with the children in the adjoining room. Every evening his brother Ruprecht came to smoke a pipe and to talk, chiefly about the navy, although he had never in his life seen the sea or a ship. He would discourse on the greatness, majesty, and growth of the German navy. Both Uncle Ruprecht and grandfather were too much convinced of the superiority of the German army and the weakness of degenerate France to imagine it necessary to comment on the one or the other. It was also very certain that the implacable enemy of German greatness, of

the German right to world-conquest, was England; and that, by the way, was the opinion of most of the workers at the rubber factory, and in consequence the opinion of the country in general, an opinion expressed both vigorously and unanimously on Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons at the *brasserie* where Adolfus, Ruprecht, and the old man went to drink beer.

When Adolfus married Luisa, she was plump and round and nice to look at, if a little inclined to be flabby. Three children, married life and the ill-chance of her kind had made her thin, with too bright a colour in her cheeks, but still desirable.

Adolfus thought her so, and so, no doubt, did old Schütz, the grocer, who sold bacon, eggs, sugar, salt and brandy—the necessary, useful, and agreeable—to the married women of the district. Schütz was supposed to be a great man with the women. There are certain perquisites which, if properly worked, fall to the share of the tradesman who has

a running account with his lady customers, but Luisa was not that sort of woman.

She had told Adolfus as much on several occasions while their grandfather wagged his head over the latest German naval annual, which he held as a kind of screen between himself and the gas-stove. Luisa told him everything, she never could keep anything from him.

When Adolfus, who was one of the Landwehr, was first called up with his brother Ruprecht to take his place against the enemies of his country, he felt no sadness, but only patriotic pride. From his earliest years his teachers, then later his superior officers, non-commissioned and commissioned, had told him that German might was irresistible, that the German soldier was brave as well as disciplined, and the German army the first in the world. That was the grandfather's opinion too, and he wept with joy and sorrow, joy because the German victories would give world-power to

the Empire, sorrow because he could not take part in a campaign that was to be as short as it was brilliant and glorious. France would be crushed in six weeks, there was no doubt of that. During that time Paris would be taken, and if the French attempted to prolong the struggle, well, they would set fire to Paris, and then of course France must give in.

Their only fear was England, but there were the Zeppelins, and the 30,000-ton cruisers. The grandfather bet on the Zeppelins, Ruprecht on the cruisers, only Luisa, who was of the earth, earthy, ventured :

" What about the rubber ? Where does it come from ? "

" From America," replied the grandfather, whose ideas on the subject were of the vaguest.

" And Africa," stated Ruprecht.

" But if the English are so powerful on the sea ? " went on Luisa.

" Well ? " inquired the grandfather sternly.

"We shan't get the rubber, and the factory will be closed. There will be misery all round here."

But the grandfather and Ruprecht told her she was a stupid fool, a stupid, obstinate fool, and that the English, like the others, would be beaten.

She dared make no reply, knowing her place and her duty. The night before Adolfus left her she almost forgot her troubles, being a woman who did not think beyond the present moment and loved the pleasure of loving.

So Adolfus and Ruprecht went off, full of confidence. Ruprecht, the younger, was even merry. Being an unmarried man, he was more explicit than Adolfus on the pleasures of close communion with the women of France. The first women he came across, however, happened to be Belgians, and as they did not appreciate his advances he bayoneted two or three of them near Termonde. His officers had

demonstrated that no mercy must be shown to disobedient civilians and had made no distinction as to sex. A short time after he received the cross, remarking in all sincerity that "Grandfather would be pleased." But he was wounded at Châlons-sur-Marne and Adolfus heard no more of him, merely hoping that he had been sent to a hospital in Germany and would recover.

Life in the trenches was too hard for him to worry seriously about anything but himself. Eating and drinking and not being killed were the things that mattered. He went on thinking of his wife and his home, however—a wife and a home are part of a man, as it were, he cannot help thinking of them. November was damp and foggy, December foggy and cold. Despite his disciplined and resigned state of mind, his continual thought was, "What a long time the war lasts! When will it end?"

On Christmas Day he received a letter in Luisa's handwriting; the sight of it moved

him, and he showed it. With the French it is a point of honour to disguise their deepest feelings, with the Germans to display them even to excess. He impatiently broke open the envelope and the first words danced before his eyes :

" Life is hard since you went away. To begin with, your brother was wounded in the abdomen, sent on here, was at the point of death three times in as many weeks, and then died on his birthday."

Ruprecht was dead, then. In four months he had seen many die around him, but they were not his brothers. He felt it was horrible, impossible ! The letter went on :

" I lead a dog's life and pray for one thing and one only : Peace. Since you went away your relations *will* thrust their ideas down my throat, specially your grandfather, who, of course, is always in the right ! So I had to pull up the potatoes and turnips from the garden, but I shall only see to the potatoes,

the old fool can do as he likes with his turnips and his mad ideas."

So hunger, hunger and misery were in his house, in his house—that is what the man of the *Landwehr* had to tell himself. And there was the old man, the grandfather, who could not be made to understand what was happening, and babbled of victory!

"Then, of course, that swine Schütz came round to see me, and you know what he wanted without my telling you. I had to give in—the paraffin was nearly all gone."

Luisa, his Luisa!—and Schütz. Adolfus was no saint, no hero, he did not make up his mind to be killed at the earliest opportunity and he didn't even know whether he could forgive her or no. He did not know what he should do; he knew nothing except that he was desperately unhappy. In spite of himself he said aloud:

"*Es ist nicht gut! Es ist nicht gut!* It's not right."

"What isn't right?" asked a comrade.

"This war," he was about to reply, but an *Oberleutnant* was passing and he held his peace.

THOSE WHO STAYED BEHIND

THOSE WHO STAYED BEHIND

I CAME across this by chance while I was seeking other news, news that interested me far more, that was nearer my heart and that never reached me. The wave of invasion swept down from the north and covered the land of Belgium and French Flanders, where dwelt my ancestors, and where I spent my childhood, which is full of memories for me, memories and friends, more than friends even, men and women of my own blood, who as I grow older become dearer to me. Then suddenly the wave ceased, the heroism of a people and the genius of some generals arrested it. It reached the point of which we know, and in spite of its most bloody efforts has gone no further. But it seems as if the enormous

wave has frozen where it lies, has formed a wall of. ice which only the springtime of France will thaw. And while we wait for this we know nothing, or next to nothing, of the death, life, suffering, hopes and anguish of those we love. "Next to nothing," did I say? That may be more cruel than the absolute nothingness of total ignorance.

We know that our friends are there behind the wall of ice and iron, we know they are quite near us. They do all they can to give us news of them and we to receive the longed-for tidings. Now and then something creeps through, some rumour comes to our ever-listening, ever-impatient ears, but it is seldom what we want. It is not the friend or the brother who is speaking, but some stranger, who tells of things unknown to him. It is like a communication from the other world, a spirit-form, as it were, that evades you, disturbs your composure, and sometimes fills you with deep emotion.

The episode I am about to relate filled me with emotion so deep and inexplicable that I could not define its cause, still less put it into words. In a flash it made me see a new and different aspect of war, as though other eyes had been opened in the soul of me, eyes that could see the hitherto unseen. Not dead and mutilated men, not murdered women and children, nor burning and devastated towns and villages. It was something more than that, and yet infinitely less, it was imponderable and dreadful.

It was in a town of Flanders that I refrain from naming, probably because it was particularly dear to me. A refugee from this town came to my house and asked to speak to me. I questioned him and he told me the same old story. He knew nothing of the fate of my people, he knew them by name, of course, having met and spoken to them on many occasions before the war; he also knew where they had lived, but had no idea where they had gone, where they

had taken refuge. That they were still in invaded territory was a foregone conclusion, otherwise they would have given me news of their whereabouts.

Nothing was left of the town, he said. To complete the destruction of their shells, and to conceal their work of rapine and murder, the Germans had conscientiously set fire to what was left. All that remained of a church burned to the ground was an unharmed Madonna—there always was a Blessed Virgin left standing among the ruins, always a miracle to be cited. All the houses were wrecked save two or three forgotten or left by the enemy and almost intact save for the roof. There was the great hole, the dreadful pit in which all the victims were thrown pell-mell, murdered women, children, and old men. Over their bodies a light layer of earth was thrown, and on the top of it, heavy paving-stones, but the invaders dug them up the other day, no one knows why.

All this was horrible, horrible, I said, but the most cruel part of it was that the horror was only mental and no longer physical, for I was prepared for it, was expecting it, my capacity for suffering and revolt had been exhausted. The refugee did not seem surprised at my callousness.

"I am just like you," he said. "When I went back there from Holland I knew quite well that I shouldn't feel things so much, because I knew what to expect. I did not even mind when I found the greater part of my house fallen into the cellar. I should never have thought one could become so indifferent to one's own suffering. That is probably because the disaster is too great, too far-reaching and universal. A man says to himself, 'Of course so-and-so has happened!' Or maybe his understanding fails, it is too much for human understanding, something in the nature of a tremendous noise that momentarily deafens one. But there was one thing I saw that tore my

very heart-strings. I had looked at everything without tears, and yet as I looked at this one thing I felt them rising to my eyes.

"Oh, it was nothing, nothing at all. One feels ashamed, in fact, at minding so much.

"Of course you know that every one keeps a dog in that part of the country, either for shooting or as a watch-dog, or as a pet, it's the same everywhere, of course. And when all the people were murdered or fled from the place, the dogs were left behind; they stayed in the ruined town. How they managed to find food I cannot tell; they caught rats, I suppose, and went far out into the country hunting, but they returned as quickly as they could and waited all together along the road at the entrance to the town.

"There were two or three hundred of them of all descriptions, hounds, spaniels, sheep-dogs, fox-terriers, and tiny ridiculous

pet dogs. There they were with their heads all turned in the same direction, with a look of passionate intense and melancholy expectation. Waiting! What for? Oh, that was easy to see!

"Sometimes one of the refugees in Holland would decide to return to his town. The longing to be in his own country, to know what was left of his home, to search among the ruins, was stronger than his fear or his hate. And then sometimes, sometimes one of the dogs would *recognise his master! His* dog!

"Picture the scene to yourself! With pricked-up ears and straining eyes they see far away along the road to Holland a Man coming, a Man without a peaked helmet, without a uniform. Then what excitement, painful and intense, among all the poor brutes straining their eyes to see—dogs have not very good sight—and sniffing, sniffing with their noses that are so much more reliable than their eyes. Then the

leap forward, the great bound of the dog who smells his master, his mad, wild rush along the torn-up road with its great pits dug by the shells, its ruts made by the transport waggons and its lines of trenches. Then comes his loud cry of joy, as, with wagging tail, bounding feet and caressing tongue, his whole body seems one tremor of gladness!

"That dog never leaves the man's side, for fear of losing him. For a day or two days he stays close beside him, without food if need be, and then goes away with him.

"But you should see the others when he goes. There they are, still on the road, still at their posts. And when they see the departure of their comrade, the comrade who has found what they still desperately wait for, and will await until death overtakes them, they lift up their heads with long-drawn howls and great wails that fill the air and continue until dog and man

disappear from view. Then they cease their cries, but do not stir. They are there hoping.

"When you see this, you must weep, monsieur, weep bitterly, as they do. Please excuse me."

THE DOVE-COT

THE DOVE-COT

SERGEANT BERLE went rapidly down the village high street carrying his field telephone and a hoop of fine copper wire, part of which he had twisted round his body. He glanced unseeing at the houses ruined by the enemy's artillery, but the sight had become too familiar to move him in any way. What would have astonished him after three months' stay in this much-disputed northern village would be to see a roof or a dwelling-place untouched by shot and shell. The days when the villagers sat round the great chimney-corners, where the fires had long been extinguished, when the little children played peacefully in the market place and the women gossiped at the wash-house (a '105' projectile had fallen into the very

middle of the wash-house, making a great lake that looked quite natural), those days seemed to him to belong to ages infinitely remote and henceforward unattainable and almost legendary.

All he did was to hurry along. He knew the place was dangerous and that the field-glasses of the enemy's scouts were on the look-out for him in the same way that he himself would shortly spy out the movements in their lines.

His destination was a kind of dove-cot in a farm situated at the extreme end of the village, its outstanding position being the chief reason for the fact that until now it had escaped destruction, for the German artillery generally direct their fire on the centre of masses.

As for the church steeple, that was out of the question, it had been in ruins for the last six weeks. During war-time steeples attract artillery fire far more readily than they do fire from the clouds during a

thunderstorm. When man is intent upon destruction he excels the forces of nature.

Sergeant Berle's thoughts ran on thus, without any attempt on his part to draw a moral therefrom. Things were so because they were so, and you had to make the best of them. He was brave, intelligent and cool, and ten months of the most terrible war the world has ever seen had hardened him. He had already been wounded by a bursting shell and had been sent to recuperate in the hospital at Juilly. As often happens, his wound had merely given him confidence in fate. He might be "plugged," but he wouldn't be killed, that was certain. There would be tight corners, but he would get out all right.

That day, events seemed to prove the truth of the simple fatalistic confidence that, without being specially favoured by destiny, he had lately acquired. He reached the dove-cot scatheless. The telephone wire which he fastened to one of the posts trailed

along behind him, and he smiled as he saw that in spite of the bombardment many of the pigeons remained in their shelters. On the very top, near the roof, two or three amorous couples cooed gently.

There were no steps! So slight a matter did not trouble him. He climbed quickly along the woodwork, disturbing the peaceful pigeons who took to flight, sat firmly on a crossway beam, removed one of the tiles from the roof, and with the telephone receiver within reach of his mouth set calmly to work.

Calmly, for he was used to it, it was like stalking game to him. If he could only discover the spot where the battery of '105's' lay hidden it would be he, practically speaking, who would settle the death-knell of the great brutes. The gunners themselves, who at the other end of the wire awaited the information he could give them, would only be his instruments. The idea pleased him.

"The battery must be in that little gully to the north-east," said he to himself, "but whereabouts? They must fire before I can find out. Fire then, you beggars, for God's sake!"

He had not long to wait. A projectile was fired, making its peculiar and extremely unpleasant wail as it tore along. It screamed over his head. It was in truth a '105,' and it fell on the village fairly near the dove-cot.

"Hullo!" thought he, without a tremor. "They're firing short to-day."

He noted the exact spot in the gully whence rose the volume of white smoke, entered it on his map and telephoned. A second wail pierced the air with painful intensity, and this time the shell fell in front of the dove-cot, but exactly in the same line as the first.

"Damnation," he growled, "they've got me."

So soon, too, and he had not finished his

task! Prudence and the merest care for his safety counselled him to get away while there was yet time, and if the worst came to the worst he could find another observation post. But it would take time; he had his orders, and that meant that his life was of no account, but his duty everything. Berle was no great philosopher, but he dimly realised the greatness of his behest.

He once again noted the situation of the white cloud in the gully, took up the telephone receiver and spoke.

. . . . .

When he came to his senses he was at the bottom of the dove-cot, lying on the ground itself amid a heap of ruins. The little building was a thing of the past. The shell had not struck the roof, however, and it was to this that Berle owed his life, but it had pitched on the ground just beneath the frail brick construction, which had immediately collapsed. Berle found he could not move a limb, he was as though paralysed.

"I feel nothing," thought he, "no pain, but that's nothing to go by. I've heard that often when a man's badly hit it doesn't hurt at all."

He looked out for some kind of sensation in his body and limbs: the warm flowing of blood, for instance, should be felt, as he knew by experience, but he felt nothing. Then what was the matter?

With a violent effort he slightly lifted his head and then he understood. He was buried alive in an open sepulchre, so to speak. There were great beams on his legs, his arms and across his body, all weighed down by heaps of bricks and tiles. And through this ghastly, fearful trellis-work the blue sky gleamed above his head.

Buried alive! What did it mean? That he would die of *hunger* in his living tomb, and at the thought the man who feared hunger was filled with such anguish of mind that he was seized with deadly sickness, and as he was pinned to the ground and unable

to move he vomited over himself. This made him feel ashamed, proof positive that he was still alive with the feelings and instincts of the living, and at the same time it gave him a sensation of relief.

"What a fool I am," thought he, "as soon as they get no calls from me they will realise that something has happened. Besides, they will have seen the shell fall on the dove-cot. As soon as it is dark they will come over and fetch me."

His one thought was to try and find out what time it was, for he had no idea how long he had remained unconscious. If only he could get his watch and raise it to the level of his eyes! He made a violent effort to drag away his hand from the vice that held it, and at the same time he caught sight of something shining on a level and in a direct line with his head, about ten centimetres away. It was a narrow, shining circle with a black hole in the middle. He raised his head sufficiently to see a little

beyond this shining circle and found that his rifle had fallen on him and was pointed straight at his head.

"Good," he said to himself, "it's loaded. I remember loading it before I started, but it can't go off of its own accord."

And childishly he began again to wonder what the time was, trying the while to free his hand. The beam that held it down tottered, but at the same time the rifle vibrated, its cruel muzzle coming nearer, as though Berle had pushed it towards himself. At first this did not trouble him overmuch. If he could displace the rifle by moving ever so slightly the beams that held him prisoner, so much the better.

However, ten months of fighting had taught him to look before he leapt. He examined his position more carefully, and suddenly the blood froze in his veins. A deadly feeling of terror seized him, and unconsciously his body stiffened into absolute rigidity. Now he could plainly see a

piece of telephone wire which, twisted round one of the beams, lay across the trigger of his rifle, and was pinned tightly to the ground beyond by a heap of debris. Berle could not stir in his coffin without stretching the wire and bringing it into contact with the trigger.

He tried to think what would happen in such a case. A Lebel fired at ten centimetres from one's head would soon settle the question. He strained every nerve to put the thought from him—but how could he keep from stirring? Great God, how could he!

He could think of nothing else, could see nothing but the shining circle with the black hole and the cruel, terrible wire stretched alongside the trigger. He prayed to God, convinced that there must be a power able to keep the wire immovable. He prayed to the wire itself as to a god, begging it to remain quiescent. He would have joined his hands in appeal to anything.

Then, he paused, horror-stricken at the idea.

"If I try to move my hands," said he, "when I know what must result, it is that I'm mad or raving. I must remain master of myself."

He did not go mad, neither did he rave, the instinct of self-preservation no doubt came to his aid. When night fell he heard steps and called out:

"This way! Oh, come this way!"

The Red Cross men with their stretchers came nearer.

"Is it the telephonist?" they cried. "Not killed? Well, old fellow, what is it?"

"I don't think I'm hurt," Berle replied, and began to sob like a little child.

"Don't go near the beams. Bring the lantern close and cut the wire. Oh, cut the wire!"

They did not understand. He tried to explain the situation. One man carefully

cut the wire and drew the gun towards him. It took some time to do this.

"But it's not loaded, old man, it must have gone off when it fell with you."

"Not loaded!" shrieked Berle. "What do you say? Not loaded?"

And he lost consciousness.

THE RING

THE RING

I USED to meet him nearly every evening at the corner of my street, a tall, handsome old man whom I always wanted to salute, for he made me think of the army of the Second Empire. It was easy enough to see he was not well-off, for in his left hand—with his right he leaned heavily on a stick, his legs being stiff and subject to rheumatism—he carried a string bag through which could plainly be seen a loaf of bread, some eggs, and a packet done up in grease-proof paper, which in all probability contained butter. No doubt he was his own cook.

He was dressed like a prince, however, or rather like a retired colonel of forty years ago, hussar-grey trousers, shawl waistcoat,

a high stock collar showing only a rim of white above the broad black cravat, a long frock-coat hanging loosely on his tall figure and a straight-brimmed high hat which he wore slightly tilted back. He was clean-shaven, with a snow-white moustache and imperial. He walked along, carrying his bread and butter and looking straight ahead, oblivious of every one, with so proud and dignified an air that in his presence a wealthy man might well feel poor and humble.

That is why, as I said before, I always wanted to salute him, but I never dared. He looked like one of those men whom one would never dare approach unless summoned by an orderly with the words, "The colonel wishes to speak with you."

As fate would have it, however, we met the other day. I found him sitting by the bedside of a wounded man in a hospital I sometimes visit. In a flash I realised the

situation. The old soldier, bebarred by age and infirmities from taking any active part in the war, and being a poor man, unable to give, had made up his mind to offer to the wounded all he possessed : his time and his devotion. In him the army of by-gone years saluted and rendered homage to the army of to-day. The hospital was proud of him, probably they were right when they said that none of the other hospitals had such a visitor as he. When possible, he sought the wounded cavalry-men, for it was easy to see he was a cavalryman himself, but all the men who were well enough to move would come along limping or with bandaged heads and arms and gather round him; the nurses, too, would join them whenever they had a moment to spare. He was such a gallant old fellow, each woman felt that his words were addressed to her in particular.

He asked many questions of the men,

doing his best to understand what war to-day means. Their information seemed strange and confusing to him, yet filled him sometimes with admiration, all of which flattered his audience. He told tales of his own, too, and many of them, for past experiences crowded thick and fast upon him. He delivered letters and wrote others to dictation, the most faithful of postmen and the best of secretaries. Sometimes picking up a pen to write some whispered confidence he would turn to the nurses and say, "Go a little farther off, we are writing a love-letter."

And then one day he enlarged upon his theory that a true soldier must love. Love can do no other than hearten and help him.

"Would you like a proof of this?" he asked us one day. "It was only by chance I went into the army, you know, at the age of twenty. I hardly gave it a thought, for during the last few years

of the Empire, after the victories of Solferino and Magenta, every one thought that peace would be everlasting. The life of a soldier, so people imagined, would henceforth be spent in the cafés of some garrison town.

"That is why, on leaving the Lycée, I went to America. Horse-breaking and hunting Indians seemed to me the only possible chances of fighting or adventure. But in 1870 I had just reached the plains of Colorado when war was declared between France and Germany. I cast aside my cowboy clothes and came back to Europe. A month later I was at Metz in the 3rd *chasseurs à cheval.*

"Of course a cowboy is bound to be a good horseman, and at the bottom of my heart I clung to my old calling, so much so that when I wanted to soothe my horse or spur him on I always spoke to him in English. It was stupid of me, I admit, for what was the use of talking English to a French

horse? It was just that, however, that singled me out for the notice, and later, the friendship, of Captain d'U—. Don't name him," he interrupted himself, turning to me. "General d'U——, in command to-day in Flanders, must be either his son or his nephew.

"'Hullo!' said he to me. 'Do you speak English?'

"I told him that during the three years I had wandered about the plains of Western America I had learned the language perforce, and from that day onward he always spoke to me in English. He spoke it atrociously, by the way, but I cannot help thinking he spoke it for memory's sake, out of gratitude of mind and body, and that the lady he loved, who gave him the ring, must have been an Englishwoman. He never told me this, it was sheer imagination on my part.

"The days of St. Privat came. On the fourteenth and sixteenth of August the 3rd

chasseurs were held in reserve, remaining stationary with their horses. A battalion of *chasseurs à pied* was close beside us, also awaiting orders. One of their lieutenants, a young, fair-haired, rosy-cheeked boy, kept fidgeting with his sword and muttering, 'Shall we never move on?' At last, on the eighteenth, after being shelled the whole day by a battery placed against the church of St. Privat, the order came to our two squadrons to charge. Charge what? A line of Prussian marksmen who with wide spaces between man and man were climbing, crawling and tumbling up the steep slopes which we dominated. It was charging nothing, moving shadows that could neither be seized nor sabred, it was charging Death. But no matter, we had to delay the enemy's advance a few minutes; it was merely one of the glorious sacrifices of war.

"We started off at a gallop. I can still see the little fair-haired lieutenant waving

his *képi* at the end of his sword and yelling: '*Vive les chasseurs de France!*' A few moments later he was killed, poor boy, near the church. My horse had not gone three hundred yards when he reared and rolled over with his belly ripped open by a shell. Although I was as agile as a kitten and not a hair of my head was hurt, the shock of the fall stunned me. I neither saw nor heard anything for the space, I should think, of an hour. When I recovered consciousness there was nothing on the slopes down which our squadrons had galloped and up which they had returned but dead men and dead horses among little clouds of dust raised by the bullets of the enemy, for they were still firing to make the ground untenable. All I thought was, 'Now is not the time to move, if I get up I'm done for; I must wait until the firing ceases.'

"At that moment I saw the figure of an officer on horseback, careless of danger, leaning over the neck of his mount,

which was trotting slowly along. The officer looked first to right, then to left, just like a cowboy seeking a trail. This gave me courage. I got up and went to him :

" ' *Mon capitaine,*' said I.

" He looked up like a man awakening from a dream.

" ' Why, it's you,' said he, ' so you've not been killed, *mon enfant?* '

" But his voice was gentle, as though he had been talking to a woman.

" ' *Mon capitaine,* what are you doing here ? '

" ' It's a ring,' he said in a far-away voice. ' I'm looking for a ring which I lost during the charge. If my two arms had been cut off I would have managed to hang it round my neck, and now I can't find it.'

" He continued to search the ground with his eager eyes.

" ' *Mon capitaine,*' said I, ' I can see

you don't care about your life, but the Prussians are returning, you will not be killed, but we shall be taken prisoners. It's a pity.'

"He did not appear to hear me.

"'*Mon capitaine*,' I persisted, 'night is falling, you will not find anything now.'

"'You are right,' said he, with a deep sigh. 'There, get up behind me and hold on to my belt. But it is a pity—I would rather have lost a leg.'

"Don't you think that was rather fine?" finished the old soldier. "Here was a man who, while all of his company that were not killed were in safety for the time being, waited behind to seek for a ring lost in the trampled ground of a cavalry charge!"

The eyes of the nurses were wet and dreamy. You could read their thoughts. Ah! to be loved by such a man!

"That is why I tell you again that no

one can love like a soldier under fire," said the old man. Then turning to the wounded he said, " That alone makes it worth while, doesn't it ? "

They nodded their heads in assent.

THE STORY OF A WINTER'S NIGHT

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SOME called him "Ernest" and some "the Fool," no one knew that his real name was Wilhelm Pforzheim, of Dresden, Saxony. It is difficult in the trenches to get reliable information respecting the civilian condition of your adversaries, but whether they called him Ernest, or the Fool, or Wilhelm Pforzheim, he had been able to make himself exceedingly disagreeable. In fact, the beggar was possessed of initiative, a rare trait among his countrymen. He was a good shot, and at night while his comrades remained prudently in their holes he came out and climbed into a tree, and from thence at the least sound, and especially at the least glimmer of light, even the ghostlike, almost imperceptible fluorescence produced in the

blackest darkness by a face or a hand, he fired a shot which did not always miss its mark. That is why the unthinking named him the Fool, while the others, wiser, baptised him Ernest, which was a more honourable name.

The essential fact, however, was that he was in the way, and so the men had made up their minds to get rid of him at the earliest opportunity that occurred, namely at the next attack. When the great day arrived, while some of them were cutting the wire entanglements and jumping into the trenches, the best shots among them made for the tree where, to his undoing, Wilhelm sat comfortably perched between two thick branches. By a stroke of luck which he chose to consider providential, only his hand was hit, but the shock added to the sudden pain naturally made him fall headlong. He was, however, very glad to find that he had not been vitally injured. Having made sure of this

fact, instead of the usual "*Kamarate, Kamarate,*" he immediately called out in excellent French:

"Do not hurt me, I surrender."

One of them gave him another bang with the butt-end of his gun, and another wanted to finish him off with his bayonet, but Sergeant Martin, to the general satisfaction, stopped him. It was quite good fun to have taken Ernest alive; when all's said and done it is much cleverer to take a prisoner than a dead man. For some reason or other the chiefs approve of it, and it is considered the thing to try and do.

So Ernest-Wilhelm-the Fool was helped to bandage his hand with his own bandages, and was marched off to the French trenches. He showed none of the terror of many prisoners who imagine they are going to be shot then and there. He merely seemed pleased that the war was over for him, and said:

"I'm hungry. You'll give me something to eat, won't you?"

They all ask for something to eat. They looked for something to give him with a feeling of pride at being able to show him that their daily fare was good. During this time, partly out of curiosity and partly out of suspicion, Sergeant Martin asked:

"How comes it that you speak such good French?"

"I had been a gardener at Nice for six years when the war broke out," replied Wilhelm quietly.

Then Private Delebecque, who is a miner at Anzin when he isn't a *chasseur à pied*, remarked:

"Ah, that's why—"

"What's why?" asked Sergeant Martin severely.

Delebecque did not reply. His thoughts were too confused for him to explain what he meant, and he had not a large vocabulary.

He meant to say that it was because the prisoner had lived in France that he had become so venturesome for a German, that he climbed trees so well, and had learned how to get on, on his own. It was not such a bad idea and also proved that Delebecque was a good sort, as he might equally well have reproached him for bringing death and devastation to the country that had sheltered him. And, seeing that he did not finish his remark, the prisoner pitifully declared that the war was a ghastly one. Not only did he speak French easily, he was also a fluent speaker, but liked to hear his own voice, and had the same tendency as most half-educated people to repeat with sincere conviction what he read in the papers: Germany did not hate France; Germany loved France, admired her culture.

"Then what the devil are you playing at here?" asked Delebecque.

The ex-miner had a straight-thinking

mind, and his question nonplussed Wilhelm for a minute or two, but he speedily recovered. There is nothing like the expression of other people's ideas to give one confidence. No, Germany had nothing against France. She was annoyed with Belgium because the Belgians had "behaved badly"; with Russia because they are a savage, uncultured people, ignorant of German good manners; and with England because assuredly it was that accursed nation of shopkeepers that had desired and prepared for the war.

"I like that," remarked Sergeant Martin. "If you hadn't gone into Belgium they would jolly well have left us to our own devices!"

Wilhelm looked at him in astonishment, he had never heard such a thing mentioned. It could not be true. He shook his head and repeated his conviction: Germany had no feeling against France, France was made to be friendly with Germany. He

reeled off these notions as though he were reading a page of catechism or theory, and remained convinced that people were grossly unjust to himself and his country. He was beginning seriously to annoy the section, and if he had not been a prisoner they would have smashed his face for him. Delebecque reiterated :

" Then what the devil are you playing at here ? "

Sergeant Martin motioned to him to shut up. The prisoner persisted, visibly convinced of the truth of what he was saying.

" France can still be saved. Of all nations the French are most like us—" However, he shut his mouth when food was placed before him.

There were boiled potatoes, the regulation " *singe* " (bully beef) and even the carcase of a cold chicken. Wilhelm did honour to the meal.

Sergeant Martin let him eat without

worrying him. When all had vanished and the last little bone had been well gnawed and thrown down, he asked innocently :

" You have had a good dinner, haven't you ? Was it good ? "

" Very good," replied Wilhelm.

" Which did you like best, the *singe* or the chicken ? "

" The chicken," declared Wilhelm in a tone of conviction.

" Because it was more tender, easier to chew, wasn't it ? "

" Yes, because it was more tender," admitted Wilhelm.

" Look here, old fellow," said Sergeant Martin, " it's for the very same reason that your people think they have nothing against us, for the same reason they imagine that they love us. They thought we were easier to chew, I mean easily beaten ; the greater number of your countrymen firmly believe that you and your comrades are in Paris now. But when they know, as they will

know, that they've made a mistake and that it is because of *us* things are turning out badly for them, then we shall be everything that's bad, only fit to throw to the dogs, which opinion, by the way, we shall certainly consider an honour. Don't imagine you can bamboozle us, *mon cochon!*"

THE MILLIONAIRE

THE MILLIONAIRE

THEY call him "the Millionaire" in the trenches, and as a matter of fact he is one of the richest men in France to-day, although he is only thirty years old and has built up his own fortune from the very first sou. He is one of those privileged business men who, having hit upon an Idea, which is not such a wonderful thing, especially in France, where ideas are to be had for the asking, also knew how to turn it to good account, with the reasoned method that overcomes all obstacles and the power of intellect which leaves nothing to chance and appears almost uncanny in its foresight.

This does not prevent him from risking his life these days just like anybody else, he does not think his life worth more than the

life of any other. This, of course, is sound reasoning, but he might so well think differently; and that is why his comrades are so fond of him, not for his pluck, which is common to them all, but for his personal character, which they admire and respect.

If the squad is short of money he is to the front and they all share in the contents of his pocket-book. He is as indifferent to the biting cold and the long sleepless nights as Brochet, the Paris vagrant, accustomed to sleep on the benches of the Marché des Innocents or on the market baskets at the Halles. He seems as oblivious of the varying mealtimes as Quilvik, the poor little Breton boy who cannot get over the fact that he has meat every day since the victory of the Marne, for in his own home he eats potatoes and nothing else six days out of seven.

Such endurance of the hardships of war by so wealthy a man astonishes his com-

panions. One day when the Millionaire was generously sharing cigars round, Brochet made up his mind to give utterance to the question that was on every one's lips.

"Nowadays," he remarked, "we get two distributions a day, coffee in the morning, as well as wine and brandy, and we're well looked after. But look here, old man, what about September, when we had nothing to eat but dry biscuits two days running and the next two lived on our fat, those that had any, and that's neither you nor me. We got a couple of hours' sleep on the bare ground or none at all. Well, it didn't seem to affect you, you stood it like the rest of us. I should never have thought it possible. And as for marching, well, you set the pace. We left a good many along the roads that looked a good deal harder than you."

"I'm used to it," replied the Millionaire quietly.

"What! You?"

"Yes, it's an old habit. When I first came to Paris I was eighteen and had already hit upon the Idea, which I used to think over and plan out night after night—thought is for the night-time, action for the day. I quickly made up my mind that food was a mere detail, a twopenny loaf would keep the life in one, and that was sufficient. Sleep was also nothing, even shelter not an absolute necessity. A man can doze half an hour on one bench and move on to the next when the bobby comes along. You know all about that, Brochet. But a man must always be well-dressed, dressed like a gentleman, as he will be when he's made his pile, so that he can go anywhere if necessary at a moment's notice, seize the opportunity and get hold of the man who will be able to help when the time is ripe for the development of the Idea. That is what I did.

"In the meanwhile I earned my living

as an agent for various cafés, and always spent three-quarters of my wages on my dress. The commissions were paid at the end of every month, and I've known some hard times. When I had come to the end of my money I left my rooms and spent the nights as I have told you. I bought bread and waited for the fifth of the next month, the thrice-happy fifth, when I received my pay. But I bought a stock of collars and cuffs that I left with a friend, and every morning I went to his room to dress, emerging as clean and fresh and immaculate as a new pin, better than that, smart. People might well have wondered why so well-dressed a man went on foot and not in his carriage.

"And I remember, yes, I remember the end of one month, it was a particularly bad one, in August, 1901. It was the slack season, and I had not made much on my last dealings. I had been eight days without sleeping in a bed, eight days without

food, except a twopenny loaf, and I longed to sleep just once in a bed, with real sheets, and, luxury of luxuries, to have one good square meal in a restaurant. But for the time being I stuck it. You are surprised at my capacity for marching, Brochet. I had plenty of time to get used to it, that I'll swear, and on an empty stomach too. I've had good training.

"One day towards the end of this week of fasting and abstinence, at about two o'clock in the afternoon, I saw in the gutter of the Rue d'Amsterdam a gold bag, almost covered with mud, for it had been raining. Being half-starved I was given to hallucinations, and my eyes did not see things very clearly. First of all I thought it must be imagination, but I stooped down and touched the bag; it really was there, and made of gold. I opened it and found inside a little gold powder-box set with brilliants, several other trifles, all in gold, and a gold chain-purse containing about

three hundred francs in louis. Altogether it might have been worth fifteen hundred francs."

"My eye! What luck!" interrupted Brochet.

"Brochet, old man," went on the Millionaire, "the thought of keeping the bag never occurred to me for one instant. You know nothing of the dogs at Constantinople, but I do. They would die of hunger in front of a butcher's shop rather than steal anything. Why so? Because they have learned from father to son, that if they take anything from the butcher's stall they will be beaten, perhaps killed. That is what is called hereditary transmission, it also goes by the name of morality.

"Besides, there was still the Idea, and to bring it to fruition there must be nothing against me, not a breath of suspicion in the whole of my life. A man with an Idea does not steal, you know, he does not dabble in the gutter, he has better things to do.

"So I naturally took my find to the nearest police station and gave my name and address, an address I no longer possessed, but what else could I do? I had to give an address of some kind. Then I told them where I had picked up the bag, and took myself off.

"I had barely reached the Place de la Trinité when I felt giddy and had to cling for support to the railings surrounding the church. My empty stomach hurt horribly. It was too much, too much! I thought of all the gold I had just given up, and which would have kept me alive. Then, and then only, did I remember the reward that would be offered, for the owners of lost property generally give something to the finder who restores their possessions.

"Should such a stroke of luck come my way, however, it would not be for a week, a fortnight, perhaps. A letter would be sent to my old address from the *préfecture*, and by that time I should be under the daisies.

If only I had waited; no doubt the person who had lost the bag would notice her loss and go straight to the police station to give a description of the article.

"I went up the Rue d'Amsterdam again with a vague hope within me. I was not very steady on my pins and feebly cursed the slowness of my progress. You know all about police stations, they are all alike in Paris. First comes an ante-room with two or three clerks, on the right is the inspector's office, on the left the secretary's office. I spoke to one of the clerks in the ante-room:

"'Did the owner of the bag come here?' I inquired.

"'Yes, monsieur,' replied the clerk, 'I believe she is still here, yes, over there, making her statement to one of my colleagues.'

"The lady heard me and turned round. She was a slight, pretty woman, very fashionably dressed, wearing a fifteen-guinea hat

on her head. Her bag had been restored to her and she was smiling with relief.

" ' It is you, monsieur, you who found—'

" She searched in her little gold-meshed purse and pulled out two twenty-franc pieces. Forty francs ! enough to sleep in a bed, enough to satisfy my hunger. I was white with hunger, and the sudden hope made me flush.

" She noticed the flush, and at the same time took in my appearance, seeing a well-dressed man in light trousers, a frock coat, and a top hat. She had just saved herself from making a *faux pas* and from outraging etiquette and my susceptibilities at the same time ! She flushed in her turn and dropped the two louis in her bag ; then holding out her hand she said warmly :

" ' Thank you, monsieur, thank you, it is too good of you.' "

" Well ? " inquired Brochet.

" She took out a card-case and handed me a card on which was her address. She

reflected, no doubt, that not only had she found her lost property, but perhaps a client into the bargain."

"And yet—" said Brochet reflectively.

"Yes, she might have rewarded me quite nicely, but I was too hungry for anything. So she went off, that's all; and, when all's said and done, I did not die, for here I am!"

THE ADVENTURE OF JULIUS RÜCKERT

THE ADVENTURE OF JULIUS RÜCKERT

THE secret motive that had brought Julius Rückert to Dunkirk, which by the way had cost him much ingenious effort, is that he hoped to get thence to Holland and so to Germany. He lived in Paris, and, although he had been a naturalised Frenchman for ten years and was above the military age, he had remained faithful at the bottom of his heart to his native country. He loved and admired it and passionately desired the success of its arms, and success seemed to him inevitable in those days when the German hordes swept over France like an irresistible flood.

I do not accuse him of being a spy. The police of Paris, which had kept a strict

watch on him, had discovered nothing to his discredit; he was ignorant of the cunning art of the photographer, had not attempted to procure information of any kind, and wireless apparatus was a mystery to him. Julius Rückert was a German by nature and education, in spite of the naturalisation which had seemed necessary to his success in business and from which his consul had not tried to dissuade him. Later on, said he, if Julius wished to resume his true nationality it would be possible to arrange the matter.

Now it seemed as though the French lines guarding Paris were likely to be forced. Julius thought the time had come to leave the city which had given him the most generous hospitality for ten years and where he had made a fortune, and to become once more a child confessed of great and glorious Germany. When after infinite trouble he reached Dunkirk, he quickly perceived that he would not be able to finish his journey.

Although the administration of France appears less severe than that of Belgium or England, who have interned their aliens in strictly guarded camps, precautions were none the less taken. When Julius reached Dunkirk he learned with visible astonishment and hidden indignation that he could get no passport; he was in France, and there he must remain until the war was over.

It was then he made up his mind to go to Havre by sea. Once there he might have the good fortune to get on board a ship bound for the United States, where at least he would be welcomed by those of his fellow-countrymen who, in spite of their newly-acquired nationality, were still, and always had been, devoted to their glorious Germany. To cut a long story short, however, Julius Rückert's hopes were again disappointed. It was not much easier to embark from Havre for America than it had been to get from Dunkirk to Holland. It is not my intention, however, to relate

the geographical disappointments of Julius Rückert, but merely those of his feelings.

When he formed the project of embarking at Havre for America he was none the less doubtful as to the success of such an enterprise. A state of war existed on the high seas as well as on the continent of Europe; would it be so simple a matter, then, to find a boat willing to run the risks of the voyage? Would not the cost be greater because of the dangers to which the boat and her cargo would be exposed? He made these inquiries with an anxiety mingled with patriotic longing. The authorities could not quite make him out.

"Certainly not," replied the company's agent, "the sailings will take place as usual, they will be more frequent, if anything; now's the time to fill in the gaps left by the non-appearance of the German boats."

The people of the town looked alert and joyous, as in the time of Jean Bart. Julius

was taken aback; nevertheless, he boarded the liner at the appointed time. There was nothing else for him to do.

"At any rate," thought he, "I shall be in the company of panic-stricken refugees. I shall see in their faces and in their eyes the terror of the catastrophe that threatens their country and the shame caused by the invasion of our armies!"

He strolled about the deck greedily seeking signs of shame and fear and entering into conversation with the passengers, but he saw nothing to rejoice his heart, or rather he heard nothing. All these French folk spoke of the war and the refugees exchanged experiences of the invasion. Then with quiet assurance they added, "Later on, when it's all over, when we have beaten them, we shall set to work again." And they made plans for the future, for a life of peace established and definite, of glory and honour.

Their attitude was comparable to that of

a family with a child ill of some youthful complaint, chicken-pox or scarlatina, which almost invariably ends in complete recovery when due precaution has been taken and the doctor called in. It's a trying time, nothing more.

Julius Rückert, however, was not without anxiety on his own account. He thought the boat was going too rapidly, and worried the captain with questions :

"Suppose there were mines," said he.

"Mines ?" answered the captain, "they've mostly been swept up. The first thing the English fleet and ours did was to ensure the safe transit of trading and passenger vessels. The rest will follow later ; the seas are free, do you hear ? Free for us."

"Then," went on Julius, still anxious, "you don't slacken speed or stop anywhere ?"

"Oh, yes," answered the captain pleas-

antly, "we shall stop when the allied fleet hails us in the Channel."

And as Julius stared at him he went on:

"In the Channel there are currents from the Atlantic and currents from the North Sea, and to the east or west of the narrowest part between France and England these currents neutralise. That's where the fleet is stationed, in fairly quiet waters. You will see for yourself, it's quite interesting."

About one hour before sunset the steamer arrived in view of the fleet, and it was as if a wall had been built across the grey water, a wall without openings, without gaps or fissures. Firmly seated, like invincible fortresses in the waves, the great cruisers held the deep channels. The torpedo-destroyers crouching among them looked like greyhounds on the point of leaping forward, and all these warships, motionless and formidable, stretched in a straight line as far as the horizon.

Nearer France, however, there seemed to

be an empty space, and it was in this direction that the steamer steered, to the great relief of Julius, for he had a feeling of mysterious terror, a feeling that he was discovered and known to this sombre, living wall.

"There aren't any of them this way, at any rate," thought he.

Just then the waves appeared to surge asunder with a roar like that of some sea monster, and the hatch of a submarine appeared, then another, and yet another, closing the channel along the whole length of it. One of the hatchways opened and a French sailor appeared. With a gesture that appeared immense he stretched his arms, yawning violently the while at the huge stretch of quiet water. He was at home there. A steam patrol boat left the line of cruisers, and, full speed ahead, made straight for the steamer.

"Do you see," said the captain, "they're coming to ask us who we are. It will take

a bare half-hour; we are French, you see, and our papers are *en règle*."

Then suddenly Julius saw a vision of his father and sisters far away in Hamburg, awaiting the grain and frozen meats which the Americans used to send them, and which no longer arrived, which could no longer arrive, until the day when the whole of Germany stretched forth pleading hands and said, "Enough!" Then he understood the words "the mastery of the seas," and despair filled his heart.

. . . . .

And I, who stood beside him that day, understood things as he did, but there was as much joy in my heart as fear in his. On the open hatchway the French sailor was lighting a cigarette.

THE CELLAR

THE CELLAR

It was a kind of air-hole on a level with the ground, but as big as a good-sized window. Picture to yourself a doorway three-parts buried in the ground, with steps dug out of the chalky soil leading from it into the great cellar of the Vuillaumes' farm. That is what it had been, but to-day the steps had disappeared beneath a heap of ruins, the ruins of the farm itself, first set on fire, then razed to the ground by the German shells. A little way off, on the northern side, one wall remained standing as though by chance, the end wall of the big sheep-fold. The Germans were entrenched on one side of it and the French on the other. They had been facing one another for a week on either side of this rampart and attacking

with hand grenades. Nothing could be seen of the men, concealed as they were in a rough yet complicated system of trenches and narrow connecting passages which they mined and counter-mined. The art of warfare had suddenly gone back several centuries, it had become primitive and almost puerile, yet fierce and terribly murderous. The men were like savages, fighting with the help of dynamite instead of stones.

Creeping stealthily from one of the connecting trenches, Malapert and Goujet managed to reach the ruined doorway, and levelled their rifles at the gaping hole three-parts hidden by thick oaken planks and heaps of earth. They had no time to fire, however, for as they stood in the bright daylight they could be plainly seen by those in the dark hole, while they themselves could see nothing. Four or five shots rang out simultaneously, whistling past their ears.

"They're still there," said Goujet.

"Of course they are," replied Serjeant Malapert, "they haven't been fetched away in a car, have they?"

"What about mining?"

"Lieutenant Cortot says it's not worth it; the cellar is a regular trap, they'll have to give themselves up before long."

"That's all right, but they've been there a week, and the smell!—have you noticed?"

"I've got a nose too."

"How many are there?"

"How should I know? A good many, we can hear them talking sometimes. They used to sing, and the beggars *can* sing; but they've given that up now and it sounds as though they have taken to quarrelling."

. . . . .

In the hole, as Goujet called it, were forty-seven non-commissioned officers and men of a Brandenburg regiment under Lieutenant von Plattner. The onrush of our soldiers

during the attack on Hill 206 had been so fierce and sudden that they had not had time to retreat and had taken refuge in the cellar, which they had barricaded. There was no way out of the place, and from a military point of view they were useless. They had no tools to dig passages and no explosives to mine them, all they had after the battle was what remained in their cartridge-boxes. But no sooner had they crowded into the cellar and blocked up all the holes and the doorway with old barrels full of earth than Lieutenant von Plattner had ordered Bauer, the oldest of the non-commissioned officers, to sound the roll call, and the men had answered to the call. Then he ordered an inventory of food and munitions to be made. There were a few hundred cartridges, no bread, a few biscuits, a small quantity of provisions left in the cellar, which had been used as a store, and a half-empty barrel of wine, food in all for about four

days. Lieutenant von Plattner decided that the men's rations should be reduced to one-third of their usual amount. He gave his orders like a riding-master in a circus, and his voice was thin, harsh, insolent, and sounded like the lash of a whip against the walls of the cellar.

He did not attempt to explain the motives that prompted his decision. From a military point they were correct enough. The French had not yet consolidated their position and the cellar was at the extreme end of their advance, the Germans might return and take it again, so they must wait, they must hold out. Forty-seven men, they were, the best part of a platoon; it was the lieutenant's duty to retain these men for the service of His Majesty. A French officer would have reasoned in precisely the same way—there is but one way of looking one's duty in the face—but the Frenchman would have asked his brothers-in-arms for the joint assistance of their will and

intelligence. Such an idea never entered the head of Lieutenant von Plattner, neither did his men expect such a thing, their souls had been nurtured in the fear of their superior. The first thing that discipline had taught them was that they must fear their officers more than the enemy, and this fear had developed into a feeling mystical and well-nigh great.

On the seventh day, Private Adler, who had always been a great eater, felt hungry, horribly hungry; he crept towards the corner where the bacon was kept under the supervision of Bauer. It was strictly forbidden to go near that corner, and Bauer pushed him aside with his gun. Some of the men protested at his greed, while others agreed with him. It was impossible, they said, to exist on a few ounces of food a day, quite impossible. Lieutenant von Plattner usually sat in the most comfortable corner on a wooden case filled up with straw. He

rose, asked what was the matter, and dealt Adler such a blow in the face that his nose began to bleed. Adler was a huge man, he could easily have crushed the lieutenant by merely placing an enormous hand on his shoulder. However, he took the blow without a word, his hands on the seams of his trousers, for he had stood at attention as soon as he saw the officer approach.

What is more, although Plattner had reduced the men's rations by two-thirds, he still devoured the full amount himself, at which not one of them protested. It was his right because he was an officer and a nobleman, a being of another clay than those beneath him, his right to command springing from that very difference. Thus does the new Germany differ from the old, of which she is for ever prating, for in the days of the old Germany, every man who bore arms was ennobled thereby, while to-day he is but the more enslaved. Adler did not

think of such things any more than his comrades, but they grew hungrier and hungrier by degrees, they became more and more like wild beasts striving to flee from their tyrant.

Surrender! that was the one thing to do. They would surrender! At about one o'clock on the morning of the fourteenth day they heard the steps of the French patrol approaching. Adler went to the doorway and said in a whisper, as though telling a secret:

"*Frantzœse! Kamarate! Kamarate!*"

Lieutenant von Plattner awoke with a start, leapt to his feet and fired four shots from his revolver into the darkness, wounding two men.

"Who said that?" he demanded.

He was brave with a proud and contemptuous courage that came from the conviction that he was Plattner and the others but the material necessary to prove his greatness and nobility. Striking a

match he saw the men in a group near the doorway both furious and terrified.

"Who said that?" he repeated.

No one replied, and the non-commissioned officers either could not or would not denounce the culprit. It was a grave breach of discipline, which a few days before Plattner would have looked upon as impossible. For one moment he felt a wild desire to kill one of them, no matter which one, but he altered his mind almost as quickly, realising that he would not know what to do with the body.

On the night that followed the eighteenth day the soldiers had reached the limit of their endurance, and the wine to which they were unaccustomed had almost driven them mad. Some of them were at death's door, nearly suffocated by the horrible smell, but they knew that as long as the lieutenant was there, alive, they would never dare give themselves up. Two or three crawled over to Adler and whispered:

"Adler! Adler! we must kill him."

Adler, who for days past had suffered more from the longing to kill him than from hunger itself, drew out his bayonet.

"No, I dare not," said he, "not alone."

He thought a moment. "Come along, all of you," he said, "it's dark, he's asleep, and no one will know who did it."

. . . . .

The next day Adler's voice was heard once more, but he had removed the barricades from the doorway.

"*Frantzæse! Kamarate! Kamarate!*"

Sergeant Malapert and Goujet returned to the hole.

"Come out, one by one," said the sergeant, "and hold up your hands."

The men obeyed.

"You seem to understand French," said the sergeant to Bauer. "How many of you were there?"

"Forty-seven," replied the non-com-

missioned officer, standing at attention. "There was an officer too, but he's dead."

Sergeant Malapert went down into the cellar holding his nose.

"Hum!" he remarked after an instant, "dead, did you say? He's as dead as a door-nail, with eight bayonet wounds in his breast. Anyway, it's nothing to do with us!"

THE VISITOR

THE VISITOR

THERE he sat at the foot of my bed, twitching his ears and staring at me with his little bleary eyes. For a moment or two I tried hard to think how he had been allowed indoors, for he is not exactly what can be called a domestic pet. He had a tiny twisted tail, a broad face, both shrewd and stupid, both flat and pointed, a fat, pink body, sparsely covered with dirty bristles, and he grunted gently.

"You don't seem particularly pleased to see me," said he, in a reproachful tone.

"I never kept any of your kind," I replied, somewhat stiffly, "and I never loved you—living, at any rate."

"That's human gratitude all over," said he reflectively, "you never love me alive

and are never grateful to me for the sacrifice I am compelled to make for you in the long run. And yet I have come to see you, you alone can understand me."

"Thank you," I returned, still more stiffly.

"You alone can understand me," he repeated, "because you understand the language of beasts, at least so I have heard, and that is why I have come this long journey over the Rhine and the Vosges to see you. And the difficulties with which I have had to cope! They wouldn't let me go, they wanted to keep me, but not for my sake. Now I am going to assert myself, to voice my just complaint before the butcher's sacrificial knife descends upon my shrinking throat. I will speak for myself and my brothers, one million of my brothers."

"One million?" I inquired.

"One million precisely, neither more nor less. That is the number by which they

have so brutally decided to reduce our population. Their reasoning is hard, narrow, and unjust. 'These animals,' say they, 'live on potatoes, and potatoes are indispensable to *us*, for we can scarcely say we belong to the civilised European races distinguished from the Barbarians by Homer in the following terms: "The races that eat bread." We, on the contrary, eat but little bread, we look upon it as a kind of *hors d'œuvre* to help out the fat and greasy foods in which we so delight—it is almost entirely from us that the wretched creatures derive these fat and greasy foods—instead of bread we eat potatoes. And now the store of potatoes is running short, there will not be enough for us and for them, so they must be killed, the greater number of them. They must be killed—one hundred thousand and yet another nine hundred thousand. All we have to do is to salt down their remains.'"

"I quite see that such a prospect must

indeed be a dismal one for your race," I replied, "but is it not your inevitable destiny? Of all the animals appropriated by man for his use and consumption, it is very evident that you have accepted your fate with the greatest resignation in exchange for a life short, in truth, but comfortable."

"You are mistaken," he answered piteously, "these traitors break their contracts, they have no right to kill us until our life has run its stipulated course; they commit a crime in doing so."

"But so slight a one," said I, thinking of other crimes.

"So it may seem to you, but grant us at least the right to a different opinion. Descendants of the savage *sus scrofa palustris* that frequented the forests and defended his lair and life with fierce energy, and seeing that, all things considered, we gained little by resistance, we entered into a pact with man. Eighteen months of life they granted us, eighteen months, with food and lodging,

then they could do with us as they would, but we had a right to our eighteen months. It is a crime to cut them short."

"You know," said I evasively, "that they profess to despise contracts."

"We know that only too well," said he bitterly. "Even us, even us, after the rest of the world! They are mad, I swear, they are declaring war on us, but then, of course, we have no means of defending ourselves. They will, perhaps, transform the massacre of a million innocents into a victory, announcing it in a *communiqué* at the moment of their second forced loan. Once again they will proclaim that nothing can resist them; and, what is worse, they will believe it. And yet people go on believing that we are fools—not they."

"I pity you," I murmured, "from the bottom of my heart I pity you, but what can you do?"

"It relieves me to cry aloud my indigna-

tion. These people were the last, the last on earth from whom we should have received such treatment. From the earliest dawn of history, there has ever been what I think you call a state of symbiosis between us and them. We were their parasites and they ours, we lived on one another, there was a tacit contract between us. Together we emerged from the same marshes, we lived side by side, grew and multiplied together, the one by the other and through the other. See how their language abounds in a multitude of metaphors and symbols derived from our appearance and our manners and customs! In the days when as yet they knew nothing of the art of war—for their knowledge never was spontaneous, but ever acquired from their neighbours — when the Teutonic knights laboriously fought with the Poles and Russians, one way of battle alone was known to them. Their solid, iron-bound columns advanced in the form of wedges

against the enemy, and these heavy, clumsy, snout-like battering-rams that shattered themselves against the more mobile forces opposed to them they instinctively named "sows." Whatever the result of their attempts, they might at least be grateful to us for having inspired them.

So long a service, so lasting a period lived together on a common territory, should have assured us the right to live out our allotted span and to die only after having fulfilled our destiny here below. Their wise and learned men should have espoused our cause, undertaken our defence. Is not one of their favourite *Delikatessen*, of which we are the source and fountain head, named *Professorswurst*, one of the glories of Mayence, which at the same time sheds a lustre on their generic title of Professor. They should have remembered this philological relationship, but they always were and always will be monsters of ingratitude. However,

patience, patience ! We shall not die without revenge. We shall not see the hour of Nemesis, but we know, nevertheless, that it will come."

" Do you think so ? "

" There is no doubt. When they have destroyed our race and have sacrificed it to their frenzy of apprehension, what will become of them three months after ? Our fate will be their fate, our end their end."

HEROES ALL

HEROES ALL

A FEW moments ago, Mme. Lambert—by the way, that is not her real name, it is what I have just christened her; her real name is one of the oldest in France—emptied the contents of a bottle of camphorated oil into a basin and then went up to the bed where, looking more gigantic than ever because of his prostrate position, lay the huge black Senegalese *tirailleur*, Moriba Koulibali, wounded in the thigh by a bullet and in the right shoulder by shrapnel, and suffering also from many minor ailments. Moriba Koulibali frowned pettishly like a great spoiled child. It was the first time Mme. Lambert had acted in this way, and he was suspicious.

The action was, however, due to a bright

idea on the part of the lady. The bullet that went clean through his thigh had most likely cut or bruised a motor nerve, which had caused him to lose the use of his foot, or, as Moriba put it, " My foot he no savvy." By that he meant that as he could not feel his foot he could therefore not control it. They hoped to cure him by massaging the part with camphorated oil. Mme. Pillot was there, all ready, fat Mme. Pillot, who scored such a fine success the other day in restoring to partial activity the right hand of Maquillat, who was an acrobat before he turned soldier. It would have been all up for an acrobat with paralysed fingers, and so the boy was overjoyed at the result and looked at Mme. Pillot with eyes full of grateful affection, of which, truth to tell, Mme. Lambert was just a trifle jealous. She determined to have her own little success.

At first Moriba Koulibali pulled away his leg as well as he could, but his nurse, bringing her authority to bear upon the

matter, began her rubbing. Soon Moriba found that it did not hurt, but was, on the contrary, rather pleasant. Besides, Mme. Lambert carefully explained why it was being done, and also Moriba was pleased at the notice accorded him. All these wounded men were weary of lying there, and liked to be fussed over when they were not too badly hurt. It filled up the idle moments, and they loved to feel a woman's hands busy with their comfort.

"You must be massaged every two hours," said Mme. Lambert.

"*Ya bon*," replied Moriba.

Once, however, Mme. Lambert forgot her self-imposed task, Moriba following her movements meanwhile with impatient eyes. When he saw she really did not intend to come to him he called out:

"Hi! Mme. la France!"

"What is the matter?" asked the nurse.

Moriba drew from under the bedclothes an enormous foot, the big toe of which

stood out from the others almost like a monkey's.

"*Corvée!* Foot!" said he simply.

Mme. Lambert looked a trifle taken aback, I might even say it gave her a bit of a shock, for she was not accustomed to being addressed in so peremptory a fashion, and did not know that in *tirailleur* language "*corvée*" means simply "must," and nothing else. Poor Moriba expressed himself as he had been taught, and the very fact of his being thus able to express himself in the language of the ruling people filled him with the conviction that he was not a savage, like the Germans, for instance, who "no savvy French."

Just at that moment, however, such a shout of laughter pealed forth from the sixty beds that Mme. Lambert realised how foolish she had been in allowing herself to be disconcerted, while, for his part, Moriba Koulibali felt that he had said something he should not have said, which made him

look like a great dog that has broken a china vase.

Ah, how they laughed and laughed, for our wounded are merry, inconceivably merry, in a fashion that is almost inexplicable to outsiders. There are so many reasons for their good spirits : first, they are weary of their idleness and the smallest event is of interest to them, and then, most important of all, they are alive, and they laugh simply and solely because they are still in the land of the living. Just think for a moment, death — tragic, sudden and terrible — has dogged their footsteps not for a minute or an hour, but for days and weeks and months. They have got off easily this time, they have paid their debt and are out of the wood, and all is well. Yes, they are sure of that, for deaths among them are rare. I could mention some wards in a hospital I frequently visit where there has not been a death for months. And so these young fellows, in whom life is still so ardent, are

filled with enthusiasm which is in a manner egotistical yet magnificent, wild yet delightful to witness.

But then, when their wounds are finally healed, when the time comes for them to go forth to danger again, in what spirit will they go? There is a notice on the wall, staring them in the face: "Get well quickly! Your country needs you."

In what spirit will they hearken to the stern, sublime counsel? That depends. I think I may assert that all are ready to begin again, but there are different degrees of resolution, different grades of heroism. Generally speaking they dread the hardships of the campaign infinitely more than the danger. Danger is part of the game, a part that they have assimilated and to which they have adapted themselves with the keen, I might almost say the miraculous quickness of their race.

Take a slater, for instance. It would never occur to him to say that he ran more risk

than a grocer; if such a thought did by chance occur to him, no doubt he would merely be pleased at the idea. What he thinks of, however, is an autumn day when the rain was pouring down on the roof he was mending, when his wet clothes froze him to the marrow, and when the hours seemed twice as long and tiring, and he remarks, "That day was awful."

The wounded who have spent hard weeks in the trenches sometimes make the same remark. They will return, if need be, but they would prefer not to have to.

Here comes the "last batch," the men wounded in the north. The eyes of these men are filled with a strange light, the light of victory, and it almost seems as if their wounds had snatched from them some deliciously tasting morsel. Go back again, did you say? Ah, yes, and as quickly as possible!

"We gave them a doing, I can tell you,

old fellow. They were simply mown down in masses, a fine piece of work ! "

" Work ! " always the same word, used naturally as in speaking of a task to be performed. A task indeed ! but a hero's task. The thought involuntarily comes to me that the word " *agathos*," meaning " good," also signified " brave in war " in those days when war was not a catastrophe as it is to-day, but a daily necessity.

The acrobat exclaims : " *Nom de Dieu !* when shall we get at them again ? " He no longer thinks of moving his fingers about to see if he will be able later to resume the tricks by which he earned his living.

" I suppose some of our fellows have been killed in Flanders too ? " I hint in a low voice.

He does not seem to take in what I say.

" Killed ? " says he, " of course ! Men are always killed in war."

Always the same idea vaguely yet power-

fully insistent, that risks must be run as long as one is on the job, and the result is that among a hundred remarks one would like to remember there is never a boastful word spoken.

One would like to remember their words, but it is not possible, there are too many of them. One, however, remains graven in my memory, because it seemed to me the highest type of heroism, and also because it brought tears to my eyes.

A wounded man had just arrived from Albert with a bullet in his arm, a sturdy, broad-faced man, as hairy as a bear, who seemed to do nothing but smile, as though he could not speak a word without a smile to accompany it. They undressed and washed him, and when there was time to look more closely at him it was seen that his hair was white.

"How old are you?" said I.

"Forty-seven," he replied, with his gentle, bewildered smile.

Forty-seven!

"What!" said I, "and they sent you to the firing line? A Territorial of your age?"

"Oh," said he, "I'm not a Territorial, I've not enlisted. I'll tell you why I'm here. I had a son who died. He would have been twenty-one to-day, so I took his place."

Still that smile.

I must tell you his name. It is Adrien Chapon. Now tell me if the whole of Plutarch can produce a finer reply than that?

HIS OWN PEOPLE

HIS OWN PEOPLE

OLD Didat the gardener was busy making a hiding-place for his potatoes at the bottom of the kitchen garden, first a layer of limestones against the fruit wall, then the potatoes, then more lime on the top and round the sides.

"Upon my word," thought Didat, "it looks innocent enough, and for all the world like a heap of materials left by the masons," and he rubbed his hands together. As he did so he heard his wife calling to him from the other end of the garden, and almost as soon she came into sight. With her hands in the pocket of her blue apron she hurried along upon her stout legs as fast as her bulk, her age and her rheumatism would permit.

"Didat," she cried, "hurry up, they're coming back."

The gardener looked more angry than alarmed. A whole week during which these German swine advanced on Paris had somewhat accustomed him to them.

The villa of M. Berquier, of which he was caretaker, stands by itself right out in the country on a rocky spur overlooking the Marne. On the other side of the house an avenue of old lime trees, proudly named the "Allée des Trois Cents Mètres" by M. Berquier, leads to the high road. So far the German plan of campaign had avoided it, for though comfortable enough the house could accommodate but a small number, and they would have been too high up and too far away from the villages where the bulk of the men were quartered. Every time a detachment went by, however, at the sight of the slate roof, the lightning conductor, the weathercock, and the red and white brick chimneys, all of which

peeping through the trees betrayed a well-appointed house, the detachment would halt an hour or so to "have a look round."

Didat had already received half a dozen of these undesired visits. The Germans rang the bell with calm assurance and forthwith asked for the wine cellar. Four or five bottles apiece was the average, and they drank the choice old brandy out of wine glasses. Then slowly they began their search.

What surprised old Didat more than anything was their almost total ignorance of the value of the things they selected. No doubt this particular villa was neglected by their experts, who, previous to the war, drew up lists of furniture, pictures, and *objets d'art* that they considered worthy of being conveyed to their side of the Rhine. On one occasion alone did an officer cut out a picture of small value only, roll it up and give it to his orderly to carry. The

silver and clothes and linen left behind by their owner had been the special prey of these helmeted thieves, and yet they almost entirely passed by the old lace of Mme. Berquier, while the servants' rooms had been completely ransacked. The Germans had felt on their own ground here, and could pillage to their heart's content.

Old Didat shrugged his shoulders.

"How many are there this time?" he asked his wife.

"I only saw one," she replied, "but most likely the others are coming on behind."

They went up the yew-tree path. This time there was no ring at the door, but the butt-end of a gun struck against the iron gate, and Mme. Didat's voice was surprised, almost shocked even, as she cried out:

"It looks as though there's only one this time."

One solitary German, in truth, presented

himself at the door, and as the old people gazed up the Allée des Trois Cents Mètres right up to the high road, not another could they see.

He was a big man from Pomerania, and his greenish uniform was horribly dirty. Besides the usual rücksack he also carried a French knapsack, taken doubtless on the field of battle, filled to bursting with invisible loot. Didat did not notice at first that he was without his regimental number.

His face was covered with a reddish beard of a fortnight's growth, and hard as the bristles of a wild boar, and his hands with a layer of dirt so thick that when he scratched them his nails left a whitish streak that remained there. He looked both evil and suspicious, a tramp armed with a gun, and that, after all, was what he was.

"Cellar," said he, "drink."

Old Didat shrugged his shoulders again.

He was expecting this. So he took the German to the cellar.

"Champagne," said the man.

"There is none left," exclaimed Didat. "Germans, other Germans, drink all."

He suited the action to the word; the tramp looked angry.

"Beaujolais?" suggested Didat.

The soldier knocked off the neck of a bottle and announced it to be poor stuff.

"Burgundy," he ordered.

Old Didat at last managed to unearth some Burgundy. The soldier chose three bottles, to which he added a flask of Benedictine.

"Carry that," said he.

As they emerged from the cellar they met Mme. Didat.

"Dinner," said the soldier, giving her the bottles. "Good dinner. Soup, omelet, mutton, beef, veal, ham, entremets. Sugar, much sugar. Shoot you if dinner bad."

Then with a hand on the gardener's shoulder :

" Show house," said he, " show everything, everything."

He seemed really annoyed to find the silver gone. In the dining-room he took possession of two gilt sconces left by his predecessors because they were fixed to the wall. He opened his knapsack to put them in and the gardener had a glimpse of a silver ladle, silver cups and a gold bracelet and even three billiard balls, the booty of his former expeditions.

" Shirts," said he, " pants, flannel vests."

But they had all been taken. He began to grow dangerous, and seized old Didat by the throat. Mme. Didat, terrified, gave him one of her husband's shirts. He went into M. Berquier's dressing-room to put it on, and there discovered a bath and geyser.

" Bath," said he, " hot water, quick."

Old Didat had to heat the bath and to

rub him down after he had taken it. Then the great naked fellow ransacked the room, finally discovering a bottle of toilet water and a stick of cosmetic. He rubbed the whole of the cosmetic into his hideous beard and poured the toilet water on his head. Then he dined.

He drank the three bottles of Burgundy. He drank the flask of Benedictine, and when he had finished that he asked for "something more." They gave him choice old brandy, which he swallowed wholesale, and strange to say, the more he drank the more depressed did he become. His anxiety grew in proportion with his drunkenness.

He chose M. Berquier's room to sleep in, but insisted that old Didat should place a mattress outside the door and sleep upon it. The gardener kept guard until he heard him snoring, then he got up and went to the garden.

He was full of bitter rage tinged with

humiliation. Until then it had been detachments of fifteen or twenty men that had invaded and ransacked the house of which he had the care, and he could do nothing against such a number. But this last one, this coarse, insolent brute, tramp and highwayman! As he went through the kitchen his glance fell upon the knife he used for killing pigs.

"If I killed him," he thought, "if I killed him—" And he could see exactly *how* to kill him and then bury him in the garden.

"But," said he to himself, "if I kill him and they find him, they will shoot me and my wife," and he rushed out to get away from the temptation. Every now and then the desire grew stronger, and he went back to the kitchen and felt the knife again, only to fling it away with trembling hands and to return to the garden. He spent the whole night in this way. When dawn came he wiped the cold perspiration

from his brow and went to awaken the thief.

The latter performed his toilet with the aid of M. Berquier's brush and comb and what remained of the toilet water. But he was in a hurry, and looked ill at ease.

"Look," said he to old Didat, "look through window. See anyone?"

No one was to be seen, but towards six o'clock a shrill sound of bugles was to be heard in the distance, and the man grew pale as death.

He went to the window and stood there watching. The sound came nearer, and a grey column appeared on the high road. The man crouched down beneath the window sill.

"Coming?" he questioned. "Coming?"

They were coming! and why not? It was the usual thing. Fifteen or twenty men, headed by a lieutenant, were on their way to the villa for a morning nip. The man rushed to the dressing-room, and

putting a finger on his lips, locked himself in.

"Not tell! Not tell!"

The German lieutenant wore an eyeglass. He was just the same as all other German lieutenants, and he demanded the cellar like every other Boche. Then it was old Didat's turn to place a finger on his lips.

The impulse was purely instinctive. The rascal who had made a slave of him, who had ransacked his house, seemed anxious that his presence should remain unrevealed. He was no better and no worse than the others, but that was no reason why he should not pay for them. Didat led the lieutenant and some of the men with fixed bayonets to the door of the dressing-room.

"German," said he. "German there."

The lieutenant shouted an order to the thing behind the door, and as there was no reply, only silence, he told his men to

break in. The tramp was on his knees, with hands lifted in supplication.

Old Didat could not quite make out what ensued, because he knew no German, but he saw them open the fellow's knapsack and draw out the gilt sconces, the silver ladle and the billiard balls. He also saw the lieutenant sniffing disgustedly at the perfume rising from the hair of the man from Pomerania, the while he pointed to the empty, the deplorably empty, bottle of toilet water.

The officer gave him two heavy blows on the head and then issued a sharp order. The soldiers kicked the man to make him go downstairs, and old Didat followed to see what was going to happen. He did see. Two minutes later the man from Pomerania was shot against the wash-house wall.

Old Didat felt a little upset at the sight. He re-entered the house, shaking from head to foot, and found the officer in the drawing-room.

"See?" said the lieutenant, who held his naked sword in hand, "not pillage alone, not pillage without orders. Pillage alone? Get shot!"

Upon which he placed the tip of his sword in a tiny drawer, which unfortunately happened to be locked, opened it, and took possession of several valuable miniatures —as souvenirs!

WOUNDED

WOUNDED

It was B, the Italian journalist, who told me this story, and, being a true one, it is very simple, extraordinarily simple, but we are living in times when not only lies, but fiction itself inspires one with disgust, when any writer, if he be worthy of the name, says to himself, "Why should I invent things, how could I write fiction? Does not that which our brothers do daily in the mud and snow of the trenches exceed —and how much—anything ever dreamed of by the imagination?" Then he throws down his pen, only taking it up again to write under the dictation of those who *know*—who have seen.

Belonging to a neutral country (neutral no longer), he was free to roam at will, not

only over the battlefields of France, but also over those of Germany. As he does not belong to any of the belligerent countries it is fairly safe to presume that his observation remains impartial and his judgment exact. I have every confidence in the tall, strong, active fellow, confidence that is all the more complete, maybe, because his appearance and manner are so different from the popular French idea of the Italian. He is clean shaven, *à l'américaine*, and quietly dressed, his speech is even quieter, reserved to a degree, and business-like. In order to avoid all accusation of verbosity or redundance, the Italians have been in the habit of indulging, of late years, in douches of Anglo-Saxon imperturbability. It is a trifle disconcerting at first, but the reflexion quickly follows that people capable of so great an empire over their outward man must be capable, if they so will it, of infinitely greater things.

I spoke to him of the future, of the forth-

coming decisions of Italy. Much of his reply was of political significance and would be out of place here. I will say nothing of what he told me, but he added :

"Then there is the blood, the Latin blood, in our veins that cries out to you."

"Are you quite sure, my friend," I murmured gently, "that just at this moment you have not once more become an Italian, I mean, of course, an Italian of the old school ?"

He hesitated, and, had it not been for the icy blasts and blazing sun of many battle-fields that had so deeply tanned his skin, I verily believe he would have blushed.

"That is a question I have already asked myself," he replied. "And yet I think I am right in what I say. It is not mere words, it is certainly no mistake to say the blood of our race and yours speaks in us. Listen, I'll tell you what I saw at the beginning of the war, during the early days of September, in a little manufacturing town

in Germany, where they employ a good many Italian workmen.

"This little town, we'll call it Illsheim, though that isn't its real name, is as German in sentiment, prejudice and passion as all the rest of Germany. You French too often fall into the error of imagining that a different mentality exists in the Germans of Prussia, Bavaria, Wurtemberg and Saxony. It is not for nothing that the teachers in the elementary schools, the professors in the universities, the pastors and clergy in the churches, the writers and journalists have for forty-four years fanned the flame of their national pride, of their memories of 1870, and their passion for war, which they consider the most thoroughly German masterpiece of art and beauty. They are neither Wurtembergers, nor Saxons, nor Bavarians, they belong to the United Empire. They have an hereditary respect for their own sovereigns, but for the Emperor, the war-lord, the ruler of Greater Germany,

it is worship, blind and enthusiastic obedience. It is neither Saxony, nor Wurtemberg, nor Bavaria, which is '*über alles*,' but Germany. And to make matters worse they have been taught to hate and despise the foreigner.

"What seems very strange is that these sentiments are of comparatively recent growth, and may yet be somewhat superficial, and that in their secret hearts they have a kind of dislike for war, although they have been taught it is the most noble use to which they can devote their mind and body. It is my belief that the Frenchman is the born fighter, and the German the peace-lover, whence no doubt arises the fact that the present rulers of Germany are at such pains to hide the real situation from the public, to gloss over defeats and turn paltry successes into great and decisive victories. Those in authority know their people.

"And what struck me most of all at

Illsheim was the fury of men and women alike at 'being forced into war!' Their fury was the result of their education, of course, but also, and chiefly, the result of the impression that they were being forced into it—every one in Germany is convinced of that, and, if the truth were realised, collapse would follow—and that those who had attacked them were ruffians.

"Now as Illsheim lies half-way between the French and Russian frontiers, in hilly country, where the air is pure and balmy, it is an ideal spot to which to send wounded. All the schools, and even a rubber factory that had suspended work, had been turned into hospitals, and the first convoy of wounded was expected.

"Most of the ladies of the town had become nurses, the mayor's wife, the wife of the *Kreisdirektor*, and the wives of the professors and teachers, as well as the smaller bourgeoisie. They, however, were not the only ones on the station platform. The

telegram had announced the arrival of a large number of French wounded, and that is why the population of Illsheim had been admitted. They were to see the prisoners; they were to breathe in the breath of victory along with the smell of blood and medicaments. And my heart was heavy—for I instinctively side with you, though you have the right not to believe in our sympathy until we, as a country, have given you proofs of it, but at any rate I can speak of my own personal feeling—when I saw on that platform of pain and misery most of the Italian workmen of the town with their wives and children. They had come to look on too, considering it a sight that should not be missed, that was all.

"Soup and coffee had been prepared, also chocolate (the Germans love chocolate, I can't think why), for the poor devils they were expecting, and at last the train appeared, slackened and stopped. I will not

dwell on the cruelty of the sights that met my eyes, you know all about it. First of all were the severely wounded on stretchers, pale as death, and, more terrible to see even than the wounded, those suffering from typhus and enteric, unable to touch the food offered them, which the wounded men devoured as though famished. Then there was the pitiful curiosity of the crowd, all eager to point out the most ghastly wounds. There was all this, but what you in France know nothing of was the kind of organised resolve, icy in its coldness, that left the Frenchmen completely out of the scheme.

"They had been methodically put on one side under a guard of soldiers of the *Landsturm*, who more than doubled the number of attendants and nurses in waiting on the wounded, the German wounded, for their ministrations did not extend to the French prisoners. There they were on the bare ground, without even a seat to sit on, with their bandaged heads and legs and arms,

with their stumps of legs and arms; and during this time the nurses carried cups of broth, coffee and chocolate to the Germans. Perhaps it was natural for these German women to feel as they did at the beginning, but I could not help the thought that they were behaving like savages. I could see only human beings in these poor crippled fellows.

"It was very evident that the Frenchmen were dying of hunger. No doubt all along the weary way the same scenes had repeated themselves, their enemies had been fed and they had had nothing but the customary ration. At last one of them could bear it no longer. I can see him still; it will be very long before I can forget him. He was a young *chasseur à pied*, once a fine, strong man, and even now hearty enough, though his face twitched continually and was half covered with a blood-stained bandage. He could walk, being wounded only in the head. Gently and with cat-like tread he crept

towards the little truck that contained so many good things. He was getting very near to it.

"Just at that moment all the spite and hatred of these German men and women, who until now had seemed so calm, suddenly burst forth. And the curious thing about this outburst was that it seemed to me put on, forced, as it were, for the sake of discipline more than for any other reason. 'Nothing for the Frenchmen,' they yelled. 'Nothing. It is the order. The papers have published the order.'

"Even then the poor devil tried to win a way through the mob, and had almost reached the truck when the women, the nurses, fell upon him like she-wolves. I will not go so far as to say that he made no attempt to defend himself—I did my best to remain neutral in the matter—but what I do know is that he was beaten and bruised. And what strength had he left to defend himself? The bandage he wore

had fallen off in the struggle and I saw his wound. His eye had been shot out, and all that was to be seen beneath the eyebrow was a gaping, bloody hole.

"A nurse took him back to his proper place, to his proper place among those who had no right to anything, and she seemed to triumph as at a brilliant exploit. Then suddenly she uttered a shriek of surprise and pain that echoed high above all other sounds, and held up a bleeding hand. A child, that still clung to her like a cat with all its claws out, had bitten her. I heard some one say:

"'It's an Italian, one of those little Italians.'

"The child was struggling wildly. They had torn him from his prey, smacked him, and were asking:

"'Why did you do that?'

"And I asked him the same question in Italian, but he would not answer.

"'He does not understand Italian,'

said his horrified mother, 'he was born here.'

"I repeated my question in German, and he replied:

"'I won't let them hurt the Frenchmen! I won't let them!'

"That," said B, "is what I myself saw at Illsheim. And you must also remember that the boy did not even know his mother-tongue, and would most probably become a German. Now do you believe what I say about the cry of the Latin blood?"

BIG SCHWARTZ

BIG SCHWARTZ

THE day when, just as he was leaving the hospital, the German soldier Wolfner remarked earnestly as he gazed at Mme. Elise, "These Frenchwomen! they have been very good to us, I must say, and to think that I've killed five of them!" the blow had gone straight to the heart of Mme. Elise. She had not trembled for herself, had not thought, as she might have done had there been the smallest room in her heart for personal fear, "If I had met that man during the fighting, armed and sound of limb instead of lying wounded in a hospital bed, it might have been my body into which he thrust his bayonet, not counting what he might have done before or even after."

She was one of the best, a woman who never gave a thought to herself, but she held desperately to her simple faith in human goodness, to the belief that some crimes are impossible, and that therefore the Germans had been maligned. To console her we said, "You judge others according to yourself, Mme. Elise," but that was no good, it was just what she could not understand that these Germans should be any different from her. One always judges others by oneself.

This is so true that after a short time she had managed to readjust what she knew to be true, and could not deny, with an obstinate, deep-rooted conviction that in spite of everything there could not be such a thing as "really" wicked people.

"It is war," said she, "that has turned some of them into savages. I am beginning to understand; in time of war men are no longer themselves, they become mad and are no longer responsible for their

actions. Look at them, look at our German wounded lying to-day on their hospital beds. They are children, suffering children, who need nursing, and they are affectionate, I know: all Germans are affectionate. They love their homes and adore their sweethearts, wives, mothers, and children."

She repeated obstinately, "Yes, yes, they love their homes far more than we do."

"Hum!" said the major. "Do you think that big Schwartz from whose shoulder-blade I removed a shrapnel bullet a fortnight ago—"

"Schwartz is like the others," asserted Mme. Elise, "he is married, and carries his wife's photograph in his rücksack."

"And perhaps his vest belonged to his wife too," suggested the major, "the vest he had on when he arrived, it was a woman's."

"You don't mean to insinuate," said

Mme. Elise in a horrified voice, "that he stole it."

"*Dame!*" replied the major.

Now I must confess that all of us would consider it a very slight offence for a soldier, be he French or German, to have helped himself to a vest, and when, as in this case, the said vest was intended to go over a woman's corset, the crime appeared slightly comic in our eyes, and disposed us to a still greater indulgence. And here was Mme. Elise shocked to the very depth of her soul, and only approaching the bed of the unfortunate Schwartz with manifest repugnance. She who would not believe that men could do murder, or worse, and had made excuses for them even when confession had been made by Wolfner himself! Women are inconsistent creatures.

You see, *she could see* the woollen vest with its queer folds in the region where Schwartz was entirely devoid of those charms which it was intended to contain,

she saw it every day staring her in the face, while the other things, *mon Dieu*, had happened so far away from her, and her heart was too tender to imagine them in all their hideous reality. We could not imagine how her desperate optimism was going to help her out of the difficulty.

The solution was a simple one. One day she turned up with a new vest, a man's vest this time, which belonged to no one but herself, and secretly, for no presents are allowed to be made to the Germans, she suggested an "exchange" to big Schwartz. She had not managed things so cleverly but that she was caught in the very act, and the word "exchange" filled us with gentle mirth.

"Well, are you still wearing Schwartz's vest?" we would ask.

But she answered good-humouredly, being devoid of vanity or coquetry; no joke about her appearance could touch her. As she herself said, her ideas and convictions were

the only things to be hurt, and I think I have made you realise what those ideas and convictions were. Even Schwartz had once more become the model of all the virtues now that his body was no longer enveloped in the shameful proof of a domestic theft, for Mme. Elise possessed the endearing faculty of forgetfulness which is one of the attributes that go to make a saint.

Then one day Schwartz received a letter from his wife.

It is always as well to say what one thinks. I can assure you that it is a tense moment when wounded prisoners receive news of their homes and their families. Think that for months they have been separated from all that they loved and that loved them from their birth. Think that they know nothing even of the progress of the war, for with an obstinacy which is at the same time patriotic and courageous, as well as stupidly mistrustful, those who

understand French refuse to read our newspapers.

Then suddenly the door opens and in comes the regimental postman, bringing with him a breath of home.

He brings money too sometimes, I know, money orders for a few marks from father, mother, wife, or even sweetheart, and that is partly why the glances cast at those privileged ones who "have a letter" by those who have none are so jealous. But even when no money is enclosed these privileged ones are envied all the same. Their friends are thinking of them, and tell them so; they will hear how things are going on.

Now on that day Schwartz also received a letter in ward C, sixth division, and from his wife!

Said Mme. Elise to us:

"You will see how happy he is, poor fellow. He will be so happy that he will

weep, Germans are so sentimental. Does it not move you too ? "

Her tender heart was already touched. We looked at Schwartz as he opened the letter. He had stolen a vest, but that did not prevent him from having feelings, as Mme. Elise said, and this time we were inclined to think her right.

Schwartz began to grin, and then to laugh, finally roaring to such an extent that his bandage came undone. Mme. Elise ran up and fastened his bandage, saying in a shocked voice :

" Is your wife's letter so amusing, then ? "

Schwartz was still crimson with the effort of his explosion of mirth, and Mme. Elise's question made him begin all over again.

" She'll be the death of me," he spluttered, " she'll be the death of me ! "

" Bah," said Mme. Elise gently, " why ? "

" She thought I was dead, she had been told so, and so she spent a hundred marks

on widow's weeds. And I'm not dead, the hundred marks are thrown away—you see how funny it is. Oh, dear, dear! what a state the missis must be in."

And with her little hands pressed over her heart, Mme. Elise gave a bewildered sigh at this manifestation of the "affection" that evidently existed between big Schwartz and his wife.

BROWN AND LEBRUN

BROWN AND LEBRUN

BROWN had been struck in the right leg by a shell at the battle of Charleroi; Lebrun by a bullet in the left shoulder during a battle fought the same day near Beaumont. When they found themselves side by side in fresh, clean, white beds in the hospital at Rouen, they greeted one another with much astonishment and much delight. They had once played football against one another in the Parc des Princes, then near London a year later, and now fate had brought them together for the third time. With the generous carelessness of soldiers who had done their bit and paid their mite to the cruel god of war, they considered the price a small one, and were ready to begin again at the earliest opportunity.

They looked upon the coincidence as queer and significant; fate certainly meant to bring them together. "The funniest part of it," said the Frenchman, "is that my name is Lebrun, which is Brown in English, and yours is Brown, which is Lebrun in French, my 'vernacular,' as you call it."

Their health was as good as possible, considering a broken humerus and tibia take about six or eight weeks to mend.

"The best part of this war," said Brown philosophically, "is that, because of their positions in the trenches, the men are so often hit in the arms and legs. Of course the head is in danger too, but that's a risk we must all run. Our bones are setting famously; when all this is over, old chap, we'll meet for the fourth time for a friendly game of football, you as a forward and I as a three-quarter."

There is nothing more natural than for two wounded men to talk first of all of

their health; there is something so artless in youth, so eager, so splendidly hopeful. These two boys played at who would get well quickest just as in former days they had played at seeing who would score the greater number of tries, and who would last out longest on the field of battle. Though Lebrun had been rather delicate as a child, training had made a new man of him. He was short but broad-shouldered, his muscles were hard as iron. Brown, who was taller and proportionately heavier, was as muscular but rather fleshier than Lebrun. Each was typical of his race, and in each case the type was of the best, for it had been revised and corrected. They were different, but each was the complement of the other, and having shed their blood on the same day for the same cause, with but one thought, and that, victory, they had become more than brothers; they were friends in the sublime sense

possible to men between the ages of twenty and thirty.

All the same, Lebrun sometimes lost patience with Brown, who, after a cool perusal of the news in the *Daily Mail*, handed him by some kind nurse, would remark with an air of equal interest: "Hampshire played Lancashire last Saturday, and Hampshire won by four wickets. I'm not surprised! they have a first-rate bowler."

"I really can't understand you," Lebrun would cry indignantly, "is this the time for such humbug? I don't want to boast, but I did my bit under fire as well as you and held out as long, I not only stuck it all right, but I didn't lose my head either, so I've nothing to envy you about. But I simply can't take up a paper nowadays without a shudder. We had so many hopes that were never realised, we expected things to be different to what they are. Oh, I wish I were back again with the fellows!

All we thought of was killing the devils, we had our work cut out, and that kept us from thinking. Here, I do nothing but think and think of what happened yesterday and what's going to happen to-morrow."

"I think of that too," said Brown, "but that's just why I am so quiet about it all. I'm jolly certain it isn't my business to arrange what's going to happen. I've got to keep my place in the game, that's all, and move when I'm told to, hit out when I'm told to, and keep fit in the meanwhile."

"I know you've got to keep fit," said Lebrun thoughtfully.

"Yes," said Brown, "you've been taught that, and that is why you Frenchmen have made such a leap forward in the last ten years. You've been given a much better physical education, but—well, I may as well say it out, they haven't thought much about the moral part of

you, and things have been different with me. Just listen to what happened to me once when I was a kid, I wasn't ten at the time.

"I was keen on football, of course, even then, and Lewis always beat me. It made me furious, and I used to get madly excited. When I left the field, and got in the streets, I used to keep on kicking my football about to keep up the enthusiasm and to try different shots. The bobby would come to me and say: 'Look here, Master Brown, you mustn't play with that football in the street. I warn you, mind.' But I never took any notice of him.

"One evening, Mother and the governor —that's what we call our Father— were surprised not to see me turn up in time for dinner, and they started without me."

"No!" said Lebrun, aghast.

"Of course! dinner couldn't wait, but Mother was rather anxious. The governor

said to her, 'Now what are you worrying about? nothing can have happened to him, there are plenty of policemen about.' And as a matter of fact between 10.30 and 12, I arrived, escorted by a policeman, and I didn't feel particularly proud of myself, I must say.

"'Master Brown has broken a window with his football,' said the bobby, 'at 38, High Street. He was, of course, taken to the police court, and ordered to pay a ten shilling fine, or go to gaol for three days, whichever he preferred, so I've brought him along for you to decide.'

"Then the governor said to me:

"'Have you ten shillings, John?'

"I shook my head sadly, I had not ten shillings.

"'Then I'm very sorry for you, John, but you will have to go to prison for three days.'

"But mother took ten shillings out of her purse to lend me.

"'No,' said my father, 'John must go to prison, first because he has broken a window, and secondly for his want of caution in failing to save up ten shillings.'

"So I went to prison for three days, and that is the way my moral education was accomplished. It is most necessary to remember that you'll have to pay if you do what you shouldn't do, and leave undone what you ought to have done. You never learned that. So many things surprise you to-day, that leave me as calm as a cucumber. Why? because I'm fighting on the same side as you and France. Our enemy has broken a window, the window of a holy inviolate temple whose name is Belgium, and he has shown a want of caution in failing to provide sufficient money for that breakage, and also for what they will claim over in the East. So at the end of the match, the judge—the referee—will say to him: 'You have scored so many points, but the others

have scored more; you have lost, and what's more you have not kept to the rules of the game. You are 'disqualified, and must pay a fine or go to prison.' "

"But," said Lebrun again, "who is the judge?"

"The judge," replied Brown, "is the whole world, and he will be there at the finish."

A BRIGHT IDEA

A BRIGHT IDEA

My interest in all things that concern the Merchant Service is of long date and well-known, and results from the fabulous sums of money my great fortune has permitted me to invest in shipping companies. Nothing therefore could be more natural —even if one doubts the sincerity of my patriotism—than the intense and discriminating attention I have given to the efforts made by Germany to destroy, with the abominable aid of her submarines, not only the steamers, sailing-boats and rowing-boats of the Allies (our enemy seizes all he can lay hold of on the sea, so as to make a great show of it, just as he devours all he can on land for the same reason), but also

neutral shipping. The anxiety I felt during the first days of the blockade was quickly appeased. Although criminal and iniquitous, the piracy practised by our enemies has not yet produced any serious economical results, but the subject continues to interest me for purely humanitarian reasons. I think it my duty as a shareholder and member of the Board of Directors to ensure the greatest amount of security to the passengers and crews of the ships in which I am interested. It will therefore be well understood that my curiosity was aroused the other day on reading in a paper the following advertisement printed in English, a language well understood by me, as it should be by all who are interested in things of the sea.

"A neutral offers to place at the disposal of shipowners and shipping companies information which will secure the safe passage of ships of any tonnage through

all dangerous zones in mid ocean or near land."

As can readily be imagined I sat down and wrote on the spot, making an appointment which was duly kept.

The advertiser was a middle-aged man, clean-shaven, and with a manly determined countenance. He had nothing of the sea dog about him, but was evidently a man of courage. His English had the slight nasal accent which made me put him down as an American, and I found I was right.

"Sir," said he to me, "I'd like you to thoroughly understand that I mean business, and my terms as such are most moderate. I want 500 francs a month with my board and lodging. I don't even mind sacrificing my daily whisky and soda to the anti-alcoholic scruples of the Allies."

"In return for which?" I inquired.

"In return for which you can be

absolutely certain that your ship will be safe to go through anything, even through a dozen German cruisers, and fifteen hundred submarines. I am an American, as no doubt you guessed."

"Well?" said I, without the least idea what he was driving at.

"Well, that is sufficient. My whole claim, which is a safe one, rests entirely upon that fact. You must have noticed that the patience and long-suffering displayed by my country has at last reached a limit. The United States did not protest at the burning of Malines and Louvain, the ruin of Clermont-en-Argonne, the destruction of the belfry of Arras, the Cathedral of Rheims, and the market place of Ypres. They did not turn a hair at the murder of innocent civilians, in spite of the fact that they too had signed the Hague Conventions, as our ex-president Roosevelt remarked. Neither did they interfere when the German navy sank American merchandise in ships flying

a neutral flag, or even American ships carrying American merchandise to Europe. Nothing moved them. But the tragic death of our countryman Thrasher, whom the Germans smilingly allowed to drown, at length roused them from their sublime resignation. They were indignant, sir, and they resolved it must never happen again. They told Germany so, and after duly investigating their claim the Germans decided they could quite conveniently observe it, as it permitted them to do their utmost to sink men, women and children belonging to every other nationality. That's how things are at present. The situation must be quite clear to you. The Germans cannot now sink a ship on which there is one American citizen without meeting with serious inconvenience.

"Now imagine me, an American citizen on board an English, French, Norwegian, Dutch, Italian or any other boat. We sail

or steam ahead through dangerous zones bristling with German cruisers and, what is more, we don't attempt to disguise the fact. With lights blazing, flags flying, and band playing the 'Marseillaise,' 'God save the King,' 'Boje Tsara,' the 'Brabançonne,' and 'Yankee Doodle,' we sail through the water as though we were on the lake of Geneva.

"Suddenly, on the troubled surface of the sea, the look-out man catches sight of the little slender cruel track made by a periscope. The sea bubbles up, parts asunder, and a German submarine rises to the surface. An officer appears and shouts:

"'I give you five minutes to put out the boats. We're going to send your old hulk to the bottom.'

"With magnificent indifference on his bronzed and weather-beaten face our captain, from the bridge of his ship, replies:

"'Call again next time. We have an American citizen on board.'

"And the passengers, men and women, crowd to the side, waving their handkerchiefs and crying:

"'Hullo! Pleased to see you! We have an American on board.'

"Then comes my turn. Draping the Stars and Stripes around me, I climb the main shroud and proclaim with dignity:

"'*I* am the American.'

"That puzzles the submarine commander. He says to me:

"'Come down, we have nothing against you. Come with us, do! We will show you all sorts of things at the bottom of the sea, fishes and drowned men and women. It will be very interesting.'

"'Not much!' I reply. 'I don't like small boats, they make me sea-sick.'

"Now, I ask you, what can the German do? He is overcome, humiliated, gone to the bottom, morally speaking, if I

may use the expression. In an extreme case if he insists too much upon his rights we can palm him off with a few oranges and bananas as a prize of war. And after that he takes to his heels thoroughly ashamed of himself, as you can well imagine."

"I understand," said I. "The plan is an ingenious one."

"*No* plan could be more ingenious," he returned. "All the German can enter in his logbook is: 'April 10th, met English steamer — or French steamer, as the case may be — 6,680 tons, but having on board an American whose papers clearly proved his identity. Nothing doing.' 'April 12th, sunk trawler, twenty-five tons, *Deutschland über alles*.' Generally speaking the trawler constitutes his consolation prize.

"This," concluded the American, "is the immense service I am willing to render. You will, I am sure, agree that it is

worth the modest fee for which I stipulate, and a state cabin, on deck, with an electric radiator in winter, and a punkah in summer. Will you take me on?"

I asked to have forty-eight hours to think the matter over, but I really think I'll try him for one of my companies. It sounds inviting.

THE END

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